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JESUS:

MYTH, MAN, OR GOD;

OR,

THE POPULAR THEOLOGY

AND THE

POSITIVE RELIGION CONTRASTED.

By J. M. PEEBLES,

AUTHOR OF THE "SIGNS OF THE TIMES," "THE PRACTICAL OF SPIRITUALISM,"
"THE SEERS OF THE AGES," ETC. ETC.

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TO A MAN

WHO THINKS, AND THINKING DARE SPEAK,

AND,

SPEAKING THE TRUTH, DEFIES THE WORLD,

THESE PAGES ARE

DEDICATED.

WHO are those in bright array? and whence came they? inquired John, while tranced in holy vision upon the rocky Isle of Patmos. The musical response came—"They are those who have come up through tribulation deep"—meaning, they are those who have been martyred for a firm adhesion to principle; who have whitened their robes in deeds of philanthropy; and who, forgetful of self, have lived, laboured, and suffered for the benefit of others. Now, reaping their reward, they drink from living fountains, and dwell night and day in the temple of God.

But who, and from whence *this* personage, with countenance so calm and Christ-like? He is a study. Thoughtful and self-poised, he seemingly stands upon a moral altitude high above the average of men. Surely he must be a defender of truth—a very veteran in the moral battle-field of life, wounded, scarred, and weary, but never defeated.

The key-note that, touching, unlocks his nature, is love. Children as naturally flock to his pulsing bosom as doves to the

harvest-homes of the good. Too religious to be theological, too prayerful to voice formal prayers, and too thoroughly consecrated to the interests of reform to veneer and gloss over human wrongs, he smites all oppressive institutions with a strong right hand—smites them, that the souls they cramp and enslave may be free to grow, and “go on unto perfection.” Aflame with faith in God manifest in himself, faith in humanity’s great soul, and faith in the triumph of good over evil, administered upon the principle of “a kiss for a blow,” he was one of the first to daringly enter the public arena in behalf of Anti-slavery principles. Subsequently he gathered golden sheaves in the reform-fields of Temperance, Woman’s Independence, and the great Peace movement, that so sweetly re-echoes among the nations the angel-song of “Peace on earth, and goodwill towards men.”

Alive to the genius of the age and the inspiration of the hour, he investigated the phenomena of Spiritualism. The evidences—as with the sainted John Pierpont, W. Lloyd Garrison, George Thompson, known in America as the distinguished “English Orator,” and hosts of others, honoured for their integrity and erudition—were sufficiently conclusive to compel belief. This, in addition to giving him tangible demonstrations of a future conscious existence, opened new channels of thought, and widened the range of mental and moral research. As a fitting crowning purpose to a previously useful life, he immediately entered the ranks of Spiritualists, lifting high the sacred banner, on which were emblazoned, like stars, the speaking symbols—*Justice, Liberty, Equality, and Angel-Ministry!*

Spiritualism is the Isis of antiquity—the sacred word—the magical key that, unlocking the mysticisms of the dust-buried ages, links the dead lore of the past to the living present. It

is comparable to a lamp of vestal fire, whose radiant light has steadily illumined the mariners of earth while tossed this way and that upon the agitated sea of conflicting passions; or to a magnetic telegraph, whose far-seeing operators "over there" send down immortal truths through bending spheres—through the dull, dense world of sense into the soul's audience chambers, a "savor of life unto life."

To you, then, Henry, as one of its earnest advocates—to *you*, as one whose soul-songs of love have soothed, whose thoughts have suggested, whose gifts have delighted, whose bravery has startled, whose noble deeds have awakened, and whose divine strength has strengthened me to toil on until death for the best interests of a common humanity, so dear to the angel-watchers of Heaven—to you, HENRY C. WRIGHT, as a *friend*, *brother*, and a *father* in the Israel of our Spiritual Dispensation, this work is respectfully inscribed.

AUTHOR.

Greeting.

GRACE AND GOOD WILL TO ALL.

RETURNING from the East by way of Constantinople, Smyrna, the Grecian Isles, and Rome, to London, and examining the Spiritualist periodicals and magazines, I found myself, not altogether uncomfortably sandwiched between our friends E. S. Wheeler, of the *American Spiritualist*, Cleveland, Ohio, and William Howitt, a contributor to the *London Spiritual Magazine*. These gentlemen, both spiritualists and well-known, especially the latter, in literary circles, criticise the *Seers of the Ages* from entirely different standpoints. This is in accordance with diverse individualities. Beautiful is this diversity in unity. Our American critic, thinking it "fair to assume the whole story of Jesus a Christian fable," works admirably from the premises he assumes. Minus the requisite evidences, he stoutly ignores the very existence of Jesus of Nazareth, and takes us to task for the following paragraphs:—

"Denying the existence of the Asian Nazarene, is simply assertive negation, and valueless to the thinker, *besides exhibiting little scholarly attainment, and less historic research.*

"Sincerely do we believe in this Jesus of the Gospels—the *man* that *was*—the Christ *spirit* that *is*."

"Beautiful is this faith—this belief in Jesus, the ascended Son of Nazareth."

"If poesy needed a Homer—sculpture a Phidias—jurisprudence a Lyncurgus—morals a Confucius—philosophy a Plato—and oratory a Demosthenes—the Israelitish nations, given to contemplation, required just such an intuitive, loving, self-sacrificing character as Jesus of Nazareth, the central personage of the Gospels." *

On the other hand, Mr. Howitt in a style exceedingly spirited, but pleasant—seriously belabours us for the "anti-christian" tendencies of the volume, and the comparisons instituted between Chrishna of India, and Christ of Syria; while a critic *impersonal*—comfortable way of shirking individual responsibility—writing in the February number of the *Spiritual Magazine*, and actuated evidently by motives very prudential and consistent, "cannot altogether commend the spirit in which the book is conceived and executed," because forsooth, among other reasons, the author of the *Seers of the Ages*

"Seems at deadly feud with all the creeds and churches of Christendom; and wherever practical, takes occasion to disparage Christianity, both directly by depreciation, and indirectly by lauding every other faith and philosophy in comparison with it."

With the mystic Zazona we may exclaim—"Strange and weird these bearings!"—too Christian for an infidel Spiritualist's fellowship; and too infidel for a Christian Spiritualist's approval. Thus,—

"Wedged between the twain,"

To quote the poet—what should we do? whither go? *who* would own us? No matter! One infinitely better, living afar in the dim shadows of the yesterdays, "trod the wine-press alone," and when night veiled those Asian skies, this "Elder Brother" of the Apostolic writings "had not where

* *Seers of the Ages*, pp. 265, 271.

to lay his head." The epithet "infidel"—harmless in this age of thought as the nursery tales of our childhood years—is employed in no disrespectful spirit. Jesus was infidel to the Pharisees, Luther to the Romanists, William Lloyd Garrison to the slave-holding Christians that imprisoned him; Theodore Parker to those conservative Unitarians who persisted in denying him their pulpits;—and the Honourable John Bright was recently charged in a London daily with "infidel tendencies" in consequence of Quaker sympathies and church-disestablishing activities.

Pondering for a moment upon the somewhat singular position in which these critics—brother members of a common "household of faith"—had placed us, the visioned glance of a two-edged sword wreathed in white rosebuds, flashed upon the inner sight. It was ominous. On the hilt was engraved in electric letters of light—"WIELD IN LOVE."

The following pages are submitted in obedience to the impression produced by the psychological vision.

J. M. P.

LONDON, MARCH 25, 1870.

JESUS: MYTH, MAN, OR GOD.

CHAPTER I

EVIDENCES OF THE EXISTENCE OF JESUS.

AN angel from the heaven of the poets sang through the sensitive organism of T. L. Harris, in the "Lyric of the Golden Age":—

"Of late, I spent a long midsummer day
With Tennyson. He almost felt my hand
Upon his brow, and sensed my spirit-breath.
Wordsworth was with me, that calm, subtile mind;
We sowed within that gentle poet's brain
Sweet thoughts, as fragrant as the new-mown hay;
He knew not that the infidel Rousseau,
In Christ's most precious love made clean and pure,
Bent over him, and wove a coronet
Of truth-flowers for his intellectual brow."

Atheists, deists—and spiritualists, a few—feeling their way under an eclipse of inherited doubt, intensified by churchal perversions, deny the very existence of Jesus of Nazareth. The sincerity of these thinkers admits of no question. They have in their ranks men and women of true genius, whose free thoughts shine conspicuous in massive folios of art, literature, and science. Knowledge, however, is not the synonym of wisdom; nor does the sincerity of devotees settle beyond dispute the truth of any theory in philosophy or dogma in religion.

Toleration is above creeds and councils, and "charity" is more

excellent than faith or hope, according to the Gentile apostle. Only the stagnant-souled nail themselves to given opinions, pronouncing them finalities. To think—to work by precedent, becomes mimics rather than full-grown men.

It was an exhibition of the divinity of Jesus to exclaim, "*I testify of myself.*" It was commendable in Emerson to say, "*I affirm myself;*" and equally praiseworthy in the American poet Whitman, to write, "*I celebrate myself.*"

But did such a person actually exist? or is the whole "life of Jesus" a *myth*, conceived, born, and fashioned by the early Church Fathers? Witnessing, on Christmas last, in Rome, the Pope borne through St. Peter's Church, in "chair of state," upon the shoulders of eight men, and the multitude kneeling, *falling* before him in the attitude of worship,—seeing most of the seven hundred bishops in attendance upon this Œcumenical Council, passing the grim image, christened St. Peter, and kissing the brazen toe, I inquired, in the silence of meditation, *Is this Christianity?* Was there a substance to this shadow? Was there an original fire behind these incense clouds of lifeless formalities? Did Jesus actually exist? and, if so, what relation did he bear to the finite, and to the Infinite? *Myth, man, or God?*—that is the question for consideration.

Ancient cities, recently unearthed, are laying their treasures at the feet of modern research. The past lives again in the recurring cycle of the present. The old and the new, circled in fraternal fellowship, are entering side by side into the temple of science, to the end that doubtful historic problems may be solved, and the race better educated upon the important matters of duty and destiny.

Investigations and hieroglyphic readings from Egyptian obelisks, since the discovery of the Rosetta-stone, have firmly established the previously half-believed marvels and records of the historian Herodotus. Recent excavations in and around the city of Jerusalem, have fully confirmed some disputed points of biblical history in reference to the Jews. Mr. Wood's late explorations (under the auspices of the British Museum) in Ephesus, seat of one of the original Asian Churches, are bring-

ing to light, and proving the credibility of many of those seemingly extravagant allusions found in the Roman and Grecian classics. Pompeii and Herculaneum, deluged in a sea of ashes and lava, and sealed from human sight for 1700 years, now lay thousands of papyri manuscripts upon the altars of Italian museums for inspection and translation; and the long entombed "Palaces of the Cæsars" are, under the patronage of Napoleon III., being resurrected in Rome, exhibiting ancient paintings, designs, inscriptions, and *graffiti*, in a wonderful state of preservation.

The director of the Museum in Naples, and member also of the Italian Parliament, after showing us the Pompeian papyri, and methods of unrolling and reading them, mentioned a remarkable caricature of Jesus Christ, discovered, while unearthing and removing the rubbish from the walls adjoining the Palaces of the Cæsars, built during the close of the reign of Caius Julius Cæsar, who was made sole Consul and Dictator of Rome for the third time, in the year 45 B.C.

The evidences are abundant that political and personal caricatures flourished to a great extent among the ancient Romans. To this kind of inscription archæologists have given technically the Italian name of *graffiti*. These scrawling, yet speaking inscriptions are found in considerable numbers in Herculaneum, Pompeii, and the late excavations in Rome. The erudite Thomas Wright, M.A., F.S.A., and corresponding member of the Imperial Institute, France, says, in his work upon "Caricatures," that "after the Nucerineans had been defeated in a gladiatorial exhibition, and their complaint had been brought before the reigning Emperor Nero, who gave judgment in their favour, the Pompeians displayed their feelings in rude drawings upon the walls of the city." These figures, quaint and expressive, bear a striking resemblance to those often seen in the caricaturist sheets of this country. Those drawn by the Pompeians, to express their contempt for the Nucerineans, were exceedingly grotesque and mirth-inspiring. Under the principal figure in the group is this inscription, rendered quite classical by the translator:—*O companions! You perished in the victory with the Nucerineans!*"

This leads to the consideration of the caricature of Christ crucified. If Palestine had no artists, Pompeii and Rome had caricaturists. The teachings and reports of Jesus' mediumistic works gradually—there being neither telegraphic communications nor "express mail trains,"—reached Rome and the rural districts. After a time the sensation became intense. The common people, and the cultured even, began to give adhesion to his doctrines.

The Jews, remember, had charged him not only with Sabbath-breaking and blasphemy, but of making himself "*equal with God*;" while the early Christians were accused by their more scholarly neighbours, the Pagans, of introducing into religious circles "*the worship of a new god*!" This "new god" was reputed to have been born in a Bethlehem manger, and what was more ridiculous to a polished Greek, or Roman flushed with national pride, he rode into Jerusalem, on the great feast-day of the Jews, upon an ass. This is the scripture record, "*Tell ye the daughter of Zion, behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass.*"

Capital for a caricature, said the artistic irreligious Roman! The caricature was made and sealed in the ruins of Rome—as Vesuvius buried and sealed Herculaneum and Pompeii—to be recently discovered during some excavations. While in Rome lately, we repaired, accompanied by Prince ——— and Dr. F. H. L. Willis, of New York, to Chirihirano, a celebrated museum, containing a large collection of relics, to see this very interesting caricature. It was important as additional evidence of the existence of the "*new god*" Jesus. The full account is given in Wright's "*History of Caricature*," which we nearly follow in description.

During the extensions and alterations lately made in the old Palace of the Cæsars, it was found necessary that, to give support to the structure, a portion of the street which had remained hidden, and virtually sealed since the days of the reigning Cæsars, should be uncovered and cut away. Removing the ruins and the rubbish, the walls were found literally covered with pictures, scrawls, and drawings, under and around some of which were explanatory writings, similar to those found (and may be

seen to-day) upon the walls, and in the deserted houses of Pompeii. The one discovered in the late Roman excavations is a Pagan-inspired caricature upon a certain Christian, named Alexamenos, executed by some half fledged artist, who, evidently from "hearsay," despised the Nazarenean Syrian, and delighted to caricature his admirers.

In this figure we have first the *cross*, and then *Jesus represented in the form of a man, the arms outstretched, the head shaped like that of the ass, and all extended upon this cross*. The Christian Alexamenos is sketched standing on one side, hands upraised in the attitude of the worship of that period. Under the mock figure is an inscription exhibiting little knowledge of the classics. Translated, a portion reads thus—"Alexamenos worships God."

A distinguished polemic, writing near the close of the second century, treats of "credulity" as related symbolically to the Samaritan Thartac, a god bearing a scroll, wearing a mantle, and having the "head of an ass." The Samaritans and Pharisees, given to derision, accused the primitive followers of Jesus of being "vulgar," of inaugurating the reign of Thartac, and by substituting blind faith and superstition for culture and science. This ancient apologist of the second century, referring to the "origin of the accusations of the Christians worshipping an ass," says:—

"The calumnies invented to cry down our religion arise to such an excess of impiety, that not long ago in this city (Rome) a picture of our God was shown by a certain infamous fellow who got his living by exhibiting to the people wild beasts, and who showed the aforesaid picture openly to all comers, with this inscription, 'This is Onocrates, the God of the Christians.'"—*Ter. Ap.*, p. 71.

When these derisive and satirical scrawls were drawn, a degenerating Paganism was proud and popular, and primal Christianity or adhesion to the teachings of the Galilean a subject of more jest and contempt if possible than is modern Spiritualism in the social circles of a conservative Churchianic aristocracy.

It requires no master mind nor overplus of historic research to demonstrate that myths are not crude creations from nothing; neither are caricaturists sufficiently stupid to have no substance—no shadow of a reality underlying their telling drawings.

Results have corresponding causes; old ruins point to past civilisations. The existence of millions of Mahommedans without a Mahomet, or of a Socratic school of thinkers without a Socrates, would be quite as tenable as that position which, though admitting a Christianity (true or false), denies the very existence of a founder, aflame with great central ideas as the culminating forces of the ages.

The testimony of the celebrated Tacitus upon the events connected with his time is exceedingly important, especially as relating to Christianity and the existence of Jesus. This historian, born A.D. 62, flourished and wrote in the first century of the Christian era. His annals, commencing with Tiberius and terminating with the death of Nero, in connection with his vivid sketches of Rome from the time of the Emperor Galba to the death of Domitian, give an account of Christ and the Christians. After Pompeii, along whose quaint unearthed streets we recently strolled, had become thoroughly Romanised in the time of Jesus's advent, the wealthier classes, as mentioned by both Cicero and Tacitus, procured large landed estates in the vicinity. The doomed city was also favoured by the Emperors. Tacitus speaking of this and the beauty of the villas, records in his annals a serious conflict occurring in the amphitheatre, A.D. 59, between, the Pompeians and the neighbouring Nucerines, in consequence of which the former were prohibited from performing theatrical pieces for a period of ten years. Now, as none disputes the testimony of Tacitus upon the matter of this conflict in the theatre, why should they the following from the same historian:—" *They (these Christians) had their denomination from Christus, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal by the Procurator Pontius Pilate. This superstition was thus for a while repressed, only to break out afresh, not merely throughout Judea, where the evil originated, but throughout Rome also, where things atrocious and disgraceful congregate and find many patrons.*"—*Tacitus' Ann.*, lib. xv. c. 44.

The evidence of the scholarly Pliny, the younger, born A.D. 61, and celebrated no less for his eloquence than the civil offices he held in the Roman Government, must ever carry great weight of

conviction, because exceedingly clear and definite. Pliny, the friend of Tacitus, sent with pro-consular powers by the Emperor Trajan into the provinces of Pontus and Bithynia, found there large numbers of Christians—believers in the Galilean Jesus—charged with infatuation and criminal offences. Hesitating as to the best method of procedure, he addressed a letter to the reigning Emperor, commencing:—“*Pliny, to the Emperor Trajan, wisheth health and happiness.*” This justly celebrated letter is too long to quote in full. Suffice it, that after informing Trajan that he had “not been present at any of the trials of the Christians,” that he had “been perplexed to determine whether there ought to be any difference made in the punishment on account of their age,” whether “the *name* itself, although no crimes were detected, ought to be punished;” he asked special advice concerning those who “had been Christians, but had left them—some three years before, some longer, and one or more twenty years” previous. Pliny further writes:—

“*I prohibited assemblies, . . . for many of all ages, and every rank of both sexes likewise are accused, and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also and the districts of the open country. Nevertheless it seems to me that it may be restrained and corrected.*” *The worst that can be proved against these Christians is that “they habitually meet together on a certain day, before dawn, to sing a hymn to Christ as God, and to bind themselves by an oath (sacramento), not to the perpetration of any evil, but to avoid the guilt of theft, robbery, and adultery, and never to break their word or refuse the rendering back of that which has been entrusted to their care.”—Pliny’s Letters, x. 97.*

In further corroboration of the proofs of the existence of Jesus Christ and his admiring followers in this period of the world, the striking testimony of Suetonius, born in the beginning of the reign of the Emperor Vespasian (A.D. 69), may very appropriately be adduced.

Remember that Suetonius was cotemporary with Tacitus, secretary of the Emperor Hadrian, and author, among other important works, of the “*Lives of the Twelve Caesars*,” still extant. The sceptical Gibbon characterises him by the epithets, “the accurate and the diligent.” And yet this “diligent” and “accurate” Suetonius most positively affirms the existence of those

"Christians" who, according to Tacitus and that learned work by cotemporary Jews—the Toldoth Jesu,* originated from one "Christus" in Judea. Writing an elaborate history of Nero, who took his own life, A.D. 68, Suetonius says—"*Punishments were inflicted upon the Christians, a set of men attached to a new and mischievous superstition.*"—*Suetonius' Life of Nero*, c. 16.

The clear-headed, deistical Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (vol. ii. p. 407), highly commends the integrity of Tacitus, and speaks in great commendation of the accuracy of Suetonius, adding, "the reputation of Tacitus would guard his text against interpolations."

There was no dispute for some hundreds of years after the Christian era about the existence of Jesus or the origin of churchal Christianity. It was admitted on all hands, and more especially by men of erudition, to have risen in Judea during the reign of Tiberius. The satirical Celsus,† who lived before or about the middle of the second century, wrote a famous work against Christianity. Origen, a long time after, reviewed it. In this noted work of Celsus, after repeating the Jewish calumnies against Jesus and the "Virgin Mary," he proceeds to declare his intention of confining himself henceforward to the "Christians'

* Tol. Jesu, chap. i. ii.

† This Celsus, who flourished in the time of the Emperor Hadrian, was, if Origen may be credited, an Epicurean philosopher. Personifying a Jew in his work against the Christians, he makes him say to Christ—"When you were washed by John, you say that the spectre of a bird flew to you from the air. But what witness worthy of belief saw this spectre? or who heard a voice from heaven adopting you for a son of God, except yourself and some of your associates? . . . What occasion was there, while you were yet an infant, that you should be brought to Egypt, in order that you might not be slain? For it was not fit that a God should be afraid of death. But an angel came from heaven, ordering you and your associates to fly, lest, being taken, you should be put to death. . . . Let us grant that these wonders were performed by you; but they are common with the works of enchanters, who promise to effect more wonderful deeds than these, and also by those who have been taught by the Egyptians to perform in the middle of the forum for a few oboli; such as expelling demons from men, dissipating diseases by a puff, evoking the souls of heroes," &c. Celsus further says—"The Christians and Jews most stupidly contend with each other, and this controversy of theirs about Christ differs in nothing from the proverb about the contention for the shadow of an ass."—*Apol.* 9th lib. met.

own books—*the books of the disciples of Jesus.*” The learned Origen, in reply, states that Celsus “had been long dead,” and places him in the time of Hadrian (A.D. 138).

Valentinus came from Egypt to Rome a little previous to A.D. 140. He was an iconoclast, and in some respects advocated an outrageous system. Still, he admitted the existence of Jesus, and seemed to rely without reserve upon passages quoted from the Synoptic Gospels, and also from St. John’s. Ptolemy and Heracleon were his two most distinguished disciples. Through Origen we have a few fragments of their writings.

Among the sceptical teachers of this period was Basilides, who must be assigned to an earlier period than Valentinus. Classical authors, as well as Eusebius, place him between the years A.D. 117 and A.D. 137. Agrippa Castor was his great antagonist. At one time he professed to be a Christian, and to have received his secret doctrines from Matthias, the one chosen to supply the place of Judas. But Christian or anti-Christian—sceptical and heretical as he was always considered, he freely acknowledged the existence of Jesus, and quoted from the Gospel of John.

Marcion, who came earlier than A.D. 148, from Sinope, on the Black Sea, to Rome, cherished such violent prejudices against Judaism and the accepted Christianity of that period, that he utterly rejected several books now in the New Testament, and is accused of mutilating and altering others. Though denunciatory in style, he confessed that Jesus’ life was not only actual, but beautiful and divine. The Christian father, Tertullian, wrote a treatise against Marcion.

Let it be carefully noted, therefore, that Jews, Greeks, and Romans—Celsus the sarcastic, and Porphyry* the classical, Hierocles, Valentinus, and others, during the first half of the second, or the last half of the first century, opposing or writing against, and *all* as anxious to overthrow Christianity as are

* Porphyry was familiarly denominated the “old man of Tyre.” He was scholarly in his habits and fatherly in his nature. The book he wrote against the Christians was publicly burned by the order of the Emperor Constantine.—*Vide Fabric. Bib. Græc. Tom. vii. p. 313.*

orthodox Sectarists to demolish the citadel of Spiritualism, never, *never*, so far as we are aware, denied in a single instance the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, nor of Christianity's originating in Judea, under the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate. Celsus is definite upon this point. He not only refers the rise of Christianity to the province of Judea, but he speaks of Jesus as "the man of Nazareth who had existed not long before his time," which was A.D. 138.

Julian, at one time Governor of Gaul, and afterwards Emperor of Rome, died on the 26th of June, A.D. 363, in consequence of a wound received from a Persian javelin, while leading the Roman legions to battle. Julian's early education was entrusted to the care of Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia. Later, his tutor in Greek literature was Mardonius, a learned Christian eunuch. When fourteen, he was sent with his brother Gallus to Cappadocia, where, while listening to discourses upon history, they were taught also the Scriptures, and even ordained lecturers. It was the intention of Constantius to make Julian a priest. To this end, after being ordained as a lecturer, he publicly read the Scriptural books in the church of Nicomedia. Pursuing his studies for some years in Constantinople, and afterwards going to classic Athens to finish them, he formed the acquaintance of Libanius, an accomplished orator; and further came into literary fellowship with several of the Platonic philosophers.

After more critically examining and comparing the two religions—the Pagan and the Christian—with the wonders, marvels, and moral tendencies claimed for each, he accepted the Pagan as the more scholarly, catholic, and divine. From this time the bigoted Church Fathers termed him the "Apostate." Upon assuming the purple and ascending the throne, he openly professed the old religion of Rome, issued an edict of universal toleration, and endeavoured to correct previous governmental abuses. Christians complained because he demanded that those who had ruthlessly torn down heathen temples should rebuild them. This was the period of struggle in Rome and the East between the old and the new in religion. The fierce invectives of Gregory and Jerome are unworthy of notice; yet judged

by the narrative of Ammianus, by his cotemporary the eloquent Libanius and by his own works, Julian must have been a man of amiable moral qualities and brilliant mental attainments. Church opponents even admitted the purity of his morals and the rigid austerity of his life.

Julian wrote several books against Christ and the Christians. Some of these Cyril attempted to refute. The Emperor's style, though classic, was sometimes severe. After penning pointed words against Jesus and John (see Hier. Epist., 83 b. 8), he says—"These things, therefore, we shall shortly discuss, when we come particularly to consider the monstrous deeds and fraudulent machinations of the Evangelists." Though living in the very blaze of Roman civilisation and oratory, the Emperor Julian frankly admitted the existence of Jesus, and the genuine goodness of his life. And yet he insisted that his marvellous works were equalled, if not excelled, by Egyptian wonder-workers and Grecian thaumaturgists, and that his admiring disciples hurtfully magnified his virtues. In Libanius's admirable funeral oration upon Julian's life and death this remarkable passage occurs—"But when the winter had extended the nights, Julian, besides many other beautiful works, attacked the books which make a man of Palestine to be a god, and the Son of God. . . . In a long contest and with strenuous arguments in the execution of this work, he appears to have excelled the Tyrian old man."

The Mahommedan Ravzat el Saffa, famous as scholar and historian, writing an elaborate history of the world, in Arabic, near the close of the sixth century, not only mentions Jesus and the wonderful works ascribed to him, wrought in Syria, but considers him to have been the "intermediate *prophet*," between Abraham and Mahomet. Does some carping iconoclast say there have been "handed down to us no documents written by Jesus and the apostles?" Granted; and what of it? Manuscript-writing was the missioned work of scribes—*not masters*—in the Nazarene's time. Further, no original documents in the hand-writings of Zoroaster, Lycurgus, Pythagoras, Socrates, or John the Baptist have reached us through the past periods. Is it

wisdom, in consequence of this, to deny the existence of these moral teachers?

It may not be inappropriate to state that those—especially American spiritualists—denying the fact of Jesus's existence, base their opinions principally upon the mingled facts and fancies recorded in Robert Taylor's *Diagnosis*. To flippant talkers he is quite as authoritative as Swedenborg to New Churchmen, or the old Latin Fathers to Catholic Christians. While none would dispute Mr. Taylor's excellent scholarship, it is plainly discernible that his imagination, irony, and prejudice often prevailed over his better judgment. His classical references frequently one-sided, indicate more of a purpose to secure some strategetic point than to elicit truth. His exaggerations admit of no apology. In the effort to show the similarity between Christianity and the tragedy of Prometheus, he says—"Prometheus was crucified on Mount Caucasus—not on Mount Calvary"—when the fact is, Prometheus was not crucified at all. This is the passage from Schutz's *Æschylus* describing the punishment:—

"Thee, with indissoluble chains, perforce,
Must I now rivet to this savage rock!"

Taylor further affirms that Prometheus, "to rescue men from eternal death, ventured to expose himself to the wrath of the Almighty Father." This is not only incorrect or purely imaginative on the part of Mr. Taylor, the translator, but what is more unjustifiable, he avails himself of that ambiguity so often connected with the word death. Here is the true version of *Æschylus*:—

"For unhappy mortals
Had no regard, and all the present race
Willed to *extirpate*, and to form anew."

His translation—*Theophrastus on Superstition*—contained so many inaccuracies and wilful deviations from the text, that many of his sceptical friends reproved him, and others entirely forsook him. Reviewing and regretting his course, he set his face churchward again in the latter years of his life in France. Mr. W——, an English gentleman of erudition, occupying socially and professionally much the same position among spiritualists in

London that Judge Edmonds does in New York, recently referred us to the place where Mr. Taylor occasionally addressed the people, informed us why he was "arrested," and, further, furnished us with some of the reasons why he repented his sweeping course and fruitless efforts to prove the non-existence of Jesus Christ, with the ulterior purpose of overthrowing the Christian religion.

Failing to discriminate between religion as a natural sentiment, religion as an elemental principle of the human soul, and the perversions of religion in the name of Christianity, his labours proved utterly ineffective. That he sought in his last years to gain the confidence of the Christian Church is, so far as we are aware, universally conceded. Accordingly, the little prestige he once had faded from the mental horizon previous to his death. None acquainted with his history now quote him as authority. English sceptics long ago removed his candlestick from the altar in their temples; and yet he continues to be the text-book of certain American spiritualists. These, quoting him authoritatively, usually conclude with the flourish—"Well, Josephus the historian and cotemporary of the public ministry of Jesus did not mention him." Such blunders are quite unpardonable. Josephus was not born till sixteen years after the crucifixion of Jesus. His first work was not published till seventy-six years after, and his second not till ninety-three years after Christ. Bear in mind, then, that Josephus, who wrote more in the interest of the Romans than the Jews, was not the cotemporary of the Nazarene. As to his famous passage concerning Jesus, some pronounce it a forgery, others, and more learned, genuine. The present tendency of classical critics, even in sceptical Germany, is to the effect that it is authentic. Ernest Renan, denominated alternately "Unitarian" and "Infidel," yet doubtless the most competent Semitic scholar in the world, contends for its genuineness. After speaking of the Gospels as "legendary biographies," written neither "after the manner of Suetonius, nor in the style of Philostratus," and the "crowd of scattered data respecting Jesus and the time in which he lived," he says:—

"Josephus's short notices of Jesus, of John the Baptist, of Judas

the Gaulonite, are dry and colourless. We feel that he seeks to present these movements, so profoundly Jewish in character and spirit, under a form which would be intelligible to Greeks and Romans. *I believe the passage respecting Jesus to be authentic.* It is perfectly in the style of Josephus; and if this historian has made mention of Jesus, it is thus that he must have spoken of him."

It matters little to our present purpose whether the passage in this Jewish history relating to Jesus be genuine or not, inasmuch as it is certain that in about fifteen years after Josephus's birth there appeared upon the stage Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny, and others, who wrote of either Jesus Christ or the Christians. Granting—which, however, we do not—that Josephus does not mention Jesus Christ, he does mention John the Baptist (*Antiq. Jud.*, lib. i. c. 5, 6), and this John the Baptist, connected with a prior phase of Christian or Nazarenean teachings, pointed to Jesus as one whose "shoes he was not worthy to unloose," and who should baptise believers with the "Holy Ghost, and with fire"—that is, with or into a most searching, purifying spiritual influence.

Modern Spiritualism, duly celebrating its twenty-first birthday, is pointing towards thirty years of existence in America, since the "Rochester manifestations;" but what Josephus—what accredited American or European historian has even mentioned by name those early heralds of this spiritual dispensation, so musical with the love-ministries of angels?

Aaron Knight, the controlling intelligence of Dr. E. C. Dunn, connected with a band of ancient and highly-exalted spirits, one of which he denominates an "angel," informs us that he has seen Jesus in the heavenly world companioned with Confucius, Pythagoras, Plato, and other holy intelligences, who shone in the twilight of the earlier ages, and whose names grace the page of history. Other—*many other*—spirits testify to the same.

A. J. Davis, not given to dealing with non-existences, was sufficiently intuitive, clairvoyant, and wise to give Jesus, in his *Pantheon of Progress* (Harmonia, vol. v.), a commanding position. Here we might rest the case. The proofs adduced showing the actual existence of Jesus are passages and references drawn, not

from Christian authors or churchal historians, but from unwilling witnesses and sources denominated "Pagan" and "Infidel." This, in the estimation of sceptics, whose good we seek, must necessarily add to the force of the evidences. If the testimony of Tacitus, Pliny, and others required strengthening, we might marshal a host of later authors—Pythagoric, Platonian, and Christian—such as Ammonius, Hippolitus, Partuensis, Pantænus, Melito, Heggesippus, Tatian, Athenagoras, Pamphilus of Cæsarea, whose private library before or since has hardly been equalled, and others of the first centuries after the crucifixion.

Gifted with genius, ability, and fair self-assurance, friend E. S. Wheeler, connected editorially with the *American Spiritualist*, writing of the "Seers of the Ages," "Men and Myths," &c., says:—

"According to Pytheas, Inchofer, Nanda, and present appearances, we must acknowledge not only the impersonality of Jesus, but also the non-existence of his prototype. Very good! for thus we are carried past Chrishna—past the Buddhas—past all the breed of 'Redeemers,' 'Saviours,' 'Sons of God,' and other humbugs, until we reach the centre of the lodge, inside the temple. "We should have been better satisfied were the assumed Jesus taken from the position of a myth and made positive as a veritable man. This was not attempted. Fundamentally our criticism upon the 'Pastophora' involved the discrimination, that as a historian, Mr. Peebles had been uneven and unreliable; inasmuch as he gave undue prominence to the assumed history of Jesus, without attempting to *prove* even his existence."

The "attempt," under difficulties of travel and distance from the familiar face of our library has been made in the foregoing pages. These evidences, selected from impartial and generally anti-christian historians, embody some of the reasons for our belief in the existence of Jesus. Are they not sufficient to confirm, or establish a reasonable belief in all well balanced minds?

In the effort to negate them, Mr. Wheeler, taking the position he does, that Jesus Christ was only a "myth," or one of the "breed of the sons of God," will of course attempt—

1. To account philosophically for the foundation of that "myth."

2. To show how that force in the world (good or ill) called

Christianity, born of nothing, or originating without the "filmy shadow" of a founder, could have produced such striking results.

3. He will be kind enough to show that those weird drawings caricaturing the Nucerineans and Jesus upon the cross, with the worshipping Alexamenos and the ancient Greek inscriptions, are all modern inventions.

4. Overthrowing the Hebrew Toldoth Jesu, the sole aim of which was to deride and defame Jesus (a "myth," or mythical nonentity), he will perhaps hurl the destructive shaft of annihilation at the writings of the erudite Philo.

5. He will convict the Arabian historian Ravzat-el-Saffa, who despised Jesus and the Christianity of the centuries, of helping to make a manufactured "myth" a reality, perpetuating it through all time.

6. He will set the late German critics, and more especially the scholastic Renan, right about the celebrated passage in Josephus, that expressly speaks of Jesus, as well as John the Baptist.

7. Showing the falsity of Suetonius' testimony with Gibbon's emphatic endorsement of his historic "accuracy," he will proceed to demolish the Roman historian Tacitus, who pointedly says the Christians had their origin from "*Christus in the reign of Tiberius.*"

8. He will sternly reprove the Emperor Julian for writing largely against Jesus and Christianity, and the Pagan Libanius for unwisely admitting in his oration that the Christians "made a man of Palestine a God;" when, with wordy assumptions, they might have ended the matter at once by denying the very existence of Jesus.

9. Impeaching that distinguished writer, Pliny the younger, and snubbing the spirits for testifying to having seen the ascended Nazarene in the higher kingdoms of God, he may delicately hint to the seer, A. J. Davis, the folly of lumbering a living Pantheon of Progress with a "mythic" nonentity.

Surely, to speak with a breath, or write with a dash of the pen a Socrates or a Jesus, a Paracelsus or a venerable grandparent out of existence, because, forsooth, *we* did not happen to

have been present at their birth, or because they made their *debut* before our memorable era, is in good keeping with neither reformer nor philosopher.

A. J. Davis, never accused of so much as a leaning towards Christianity, had the clearness and good practical foresight to give Jesus a distinguished position in his Pantheon of inspired teachers. Treating of the central thoughts of the Nazarene in the fifth volume of the *Harmonia*, he writes in this manner:—"Jesus, like every other fully inspired spirit, put personality into his religious *compound*. His charity was transparent, comprehensible, undeniable, and over-mastering. . . . Jesus did not differ much from the wise and harmonious Essenes in his bye-laws and spiritual precepts." . . .

While Mr. Wheeler denies the existence of Jesus, he affirms in the most unequivocal manner that Pythagoras was a "sublime man—a grand historic character." In proof of this position the testimony of Rev. J. O. Barrett and ourself, with references, is offered. Admirable *this* as a stroke of policy—nothing more.

Supposing I had adduced the testimony of two orthodox clergymen, with a few extracts from the Christian fathers, in demonstration of Jesus' existence, would it not have been considered a magnificent exhibition of pitiable weakness? No, no,—our friend, ever heavily shotted for battle, must not be let off so easy. The place of Pythagoras' birth remains unsettled. Hardly a half dozen men of research agree as to the time of his advent; while others, noted for erudition in the direction of antiquity, have denied the personal existence of this Samian altogether. Historic and incontrovertible evidences, therefore, are called for, settling the time, place of birth, and existence even of this "*sublime man*," of whom, according to Mr. Wheeler, Jesus was only the "pale, filmy shadow." The proofs, to be satisfactory, must be selected not from ardent admirers, or whom *we* are one, nor from modern writers prejudiced in favour of Grecian assumption, but from the cotemporary enemies and haters of the Pythagoric school of thinkers.

Right here, we must introduce to our critic the Teutonic

Zimmermann, who, with others of that class, persist in reducing nearly all the great historic lights of India, Egypt, Judea, Syria, and Greece to myths or poetic imagery. Smiling, he would probably say, "Friend Wheeler, before writing further of that 'thin, filmy shadow,' prove the existence of your *substance*—Pythagoras!"

Given by temperament and organisation to belief and trust, and admiring in our soul's depths both of those noble personages, Pythagoras and Jesus, I take heartfelt pleasure in re-saying, that if poesy needed a Homer—sculpture a Phidias—jurisprudence a Lycurgus—morals a Confucius—philosophy a Plato—and oratory a Demosthenes—the Israelitish nation, given to contemplation, required just such an intuitive, loving, self-sacrificing character as Jesus of Nazareth, the central personage of the Gospels.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN AND MISSION OF JESUS.

“No, not for signs in Heaven above
Or earth below they look,
Who know with John his smile of love,
With Peter his rebuke.

But warm, and sweet, and gentle yet,
A present help is he;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And *love* its Galilee.”

WHITTIER.

BUT who *was* Jesus? How begotten? What his nature, attributes, mission? Had he gifts peculiar to the tradition-steeped Jews of that time? What relation does he sustain to the Greek, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Christianity of to-day?

Who was he? Can the inquiry be better answered than in the pointed language of Peter (Acts ii. 22), “*Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.*” This was upon a precious Pentecostal season, when “with one accord, in one place,” they were all far removed from bickerings and dogmatisms touching re-incarnation, infidel or Christian Spiritualism. Conditions thus favourable, there “came suddenly a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind.” It filled “all the house where they were sitting” at this *séance*. Soon there “appeared cloven tongues like as of fire,” and they “began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance.” When this “was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because every man heard them speak in his own language.” Astonished and marvelling, they said, “one to another, Are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own

tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Libya, about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." Amazed, they further said "one to another, What meaneth this?" "Others," pious Pharisees, clannish Sadducees, and pseudo-scientists "*mocking*," said, "These men are full of new wine." This slur upon the Media touched the good-hearted, impulsive, and yet highly inspirational Peter, who, standing up under that clear Syrian sky, said, with an emphasis becoming the occasion, "*Men of Judea*, and ye that dwell in Jerusalem, be it known unto you," that these Media, having the "gift of tongues," are "not drunken as ye suppose; . . . but this is that spoken of by the prophet Joel: It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God: I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. . . . Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God,"—(mark well the expression)—"Jesus of Nazareth *a MAN approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you.*"

This is the general tenor of the New Testament teachings concerning the mediatorial position and office of Jesus. With no straining after mystery these scriptural writers term him:—

"The prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

"The Mediator between God and man."

"The child, Jesus, who grew and waxed strong."

"The servant of the Most High God."

"The man Christ Jesus."

Other passages declare there is—

"One God and Father of *all*, who is above all, through all, and in you all."

"One God and Father of our Lord (that is leader) Jesus Christ."

Conscious of his entire dependence upon this "One God, the

Father," he called himself the "*son of man*," and declared positively, he could "*do nothing* of himself." He reproved the people for calling him "*good*," and affirmed there was "none good, but one, and that was God." Grateful for divine favours, he thanked and prayed to God very much like other Syrian seers and sages. Denying doing his own will, he said expressly that he "came to do the will of Him that sent him;" and, finally, he exclaimed, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

That Jesus was the son of God is admitted. But that this sonship was supernatural is denied. All men are the sons of God—all women the daughters of God, having within the Deific principle of immortality. In the tenth chapter of John, Jesus called those "Gods to whom the word of God came;" and John avers, that, "as many as received him, to *them* gave he power to become the sons of God;" he also exclaims—"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the *sons* of God!"

The passage, "I and my Father are one," implies not a oneness of individuality, but a oneness of sympathy and purpose in the plan of human elevation. That this was the import of the phraseology, the 17th of John makes clear, where Jesus prays that believers "*may be one*," as he and the Father are one.

How any Spiritualist in this nineteenth century can continue floundering in the slime of Romish superstition, or imbibe enough putrid leaven from old Pagan idolatries to worship the "Man Christ Jesus," the "Virgin Mary," or any representative character, is a theme painful for contemplation. The angel of the Apocalypse, who showed John the glories of the heavenly world, enjoined upon him to "*worship God*"—a volume in a single sentence—"WORSHIP GOD."

The controversy concerning the deity of Christ, commencing in the latter part of the third or early in the fourth century, settled down at length into the Athanasian creed, received now by all evangelical Christians. This is the gist of it:—

"The God-head of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.

"The Father is Almighty, the Son is Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

"And, yet, there are not three Almighties, but *one* Almighty.

"He, therefore, that would be saved, must thus think of the Trinity."

Unreasonable and incomprehensible, such a self-contradictory dogma :

"To be hated needs but to be seen."

Connected theologically with the church doctrines of endless hell torments, the "trinity" has driven more logical minds into the slough of deism and atheism than all the Paines, Volneys and Voltaires of the continents.

Recently there fell under our notice, a volume, written by a Christian Spiritualist, entitled, "*Light in the Valley*." Here follow extracts from a "discourse on the Trinity, received through the alphabet by raps" from spirits (p. 176, 177):—

"God, the everlasting Father, and His co-eternal Son, the Christ, are indeed one, and the same Being."

"Who can discern, who can imagine the love of God, the Redeemer?"

"Having chosen to suffer for the sins of his creatures, His sufferings were like his attributes, infinite and incomprehensible. Who can describe, who can imagine the sufferings of an infinite God?"

"The Redeemer, as well as the Creator of a universe; He, for our sakes and for our transgressions, unrobed him of His glory to live the life and die the death of a man."

"All creatures are or have been sinners, therefore, the Lord Jesus took upon himself the sins of a whole universe, and, being omnipresent and almighty, He suffered for sin in all worlds at one and the same time."

Such may be "Christian Spiritualism" through the "raps;" but to educated ears, it sounds more like the dismal thunders of orthodox Calvinism,—a Calvinism unrelieved by that most monstrous and immoral feature of it—the vicarious atonement. Had this spirit been invited to "rap out" a suitable hymn, evidently this would have been the commencement:

"Hark from the tombs a doleful sound."

Jesus preached the gospel of investigation, reason and progress, to just such "spirits in prison"—the walled prison of ignorance,

bigotry, and superstition. "Beloved," said the good St. John "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits." Try them not by a church formula as do Roman Catholics, but by your own reason, and the exercise of a sound practical judgment.

Dr. Priestley, examining this matter of the Trinity with great thoroughness and candour, writes—

"We find nothing like Divinity ascribed to Christ before Justin Martyr (A.D. 141) who, from being a philosopher, became a Christian, but always retained the peculiar habit of his former profession."—(Hist. Early Christ., p. 2, sec. 2.)

The distinguished Scer, Swedenborg, tells us that—

"The Council of Nice introduced the doctrine of three divine persons from eternity. A trinity of gods was the only trinity thought of by those who composed this council."—(Swed. Everlas. Church, p. 77.)

Trinitarians contend that these "three divine persons" constitute but one God, and that this one God was the Lord Jesus Christ. But is it possible that the one true God, infinite and undefinable, could dwell personally upon the earth thirty years without satisfying the world—especially the Jewish world—of the fact? Could God be visible to us, talk to us, move amongst us, and share with us in life's social relations, without our recognising in him something of the supernatural and the incomprehensible?

There are abundant proofs of Christ's genius, of his devotion to principle, of his attainments in philosophy, of his skill in the magnetic treatment of disease, and of his exalted mediumship; but none of his being the invisible and eternal God. Further, if he was the absolute Cause of all causes, God, he must have possessed Almighty power. But this was not the case, as the following and other passages indicate:—

"I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things which please him." (John viii. 28, 29.) "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (Matt. xiii. 58.) "And he *could* there do no mighty work. . . . And he marvelled because of their unbelief; and went round about the villages teaching." (Mark vi. 5, 6.)

When healing the sick, making the blind to see, casting out "demons"—undeveloped spirits—and other marvellous works, Jesus ever required the right conditions. Accordingly, when "the two blind men came to him to be healed, . . . he said unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Being answered in the affirmative, he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith be it unto you, and their eyes were opened." In the exercise of his spiritual gifts, he constantly demanded "faith"—"fasting and prayer"—"belief"—"belief on him." These were requisite conditions. Belief and faith induced passivity—a negative condition of body and mind, absolutely indispensable to a curative magnetic influx.

Though denying the "Three-God theory" of the Trinity, tinkered up, touched and re-touched by the Church Fathers, I believe in Jesus—believe in him not as the infinite God, not as a supernatural monster, nor as a miracle-begotten speciality to patch up an illy-conceived inefficient plan of salvation, and ward off "divine wrath" by the shedding of innocent blood;—but believe in him as a *divine man*—a brother of those immortal gods and goddesses, who temperamentally and magnetically helped to fashion him, that inspired by them and a "legion of angels," he might aid in moulding and spiritualising the future ages.

It may be philosophical to attribute results to powers super-human; but not to the supernatural, for God is the soul of nature, governing the universe by fixed and immutable laws. These deific laws underlie and over-arch all events—conception, birth, growth, death. Jesus was begotten in harmony with natural law like other men. It is not the office-work of the "Holy Ghost" to beget, but to quicken, mould and inspire. All children should be begotten by the Holy Ghost; or, disrobed of the mystic verbiage of the East and put into plain intelligible English,—*all* children should be *love-children*, begotten not by the unholy spirit of passion and lust, but by and under a beautiful spiritual influence. Sensibly calling himself the "Son of man," Jesus ate, drank, slept, hungered, thirsted, whipped the money-changers out of the temple, and weary from journeying under scorching suns, rested by Samaria's well. He was tempted; endured pain;

impetuously "cursed a fig-tree;" "learned obedience by the things he suffered;" was "made perfect" by draining bitter sorrow-cups of experience, and, finally, true to his principles, and breathing sweet the soul-words of forgiveness, he died a martyr's death.

Trinitarian Spiritualist, permit us to ask you the plain question—Was Jesus Christ, that is, *Joshua*, the *anointed* Syrian, *man or God*? No ecclesiastical twistings now. Stand up to the work squarely. Man or God?

If you answer God, the "*very God*, supernaturally manifest in the flesh!" then the inquiry pushes itself—Did this God die upon the cross? Did the created crucify the Creator? Was the universe Godless for three days? Was the original version of Watts' hymn based in truth?

" Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glories in,
When God, the mighty maker died
For man, the creature's sin."

What a thought!—a *dead God*! The thought, the theological position cannot be exactly pleasant. Let it pass.

If the man—the *humanity* merely died, then there was nothing peculiar or sacrificial in the death of the man of Nazareth. Certainly, an infinite atonement could not be legitimately deduced from the death of a finite humanity.

Do you mean to say that Jesus was a *divine man*? Granted. Others, *all* men are divine—divinity in humanity, for God constitutes the essential life of every conscious intelligence. God, said the Hebrew seer, "breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul." In consonance with a constant deific influx, this was truly "God manifest in the flesh"—the *infinite* finited for manifestation in harmony with the changeless law of incarnation.

Jesus, a beautiful love-child, blessed with a sweet spiritual organization, baptized from the celestial heavens into holy influences from the sacred moment of conception, early trained by the Essenians, profoundly schooled in Asian mysteries—a "mediator," that is, *medium* clairvoyant and clairaudent, how natural seem his inspirational teachings and wonderful works.

Surely, his "kingdom," centered in humanity's innermost being, genial, catholic, and spiritual, was "not of this world." He was originally pre-existent. Conscious immortalized souls do not progress up through ferns, fish, and animals; neither are they created from nothing. Divine laws and principles are as changeless, as all spiritual entities of the celestial degree are eternal.

Though surrounded by untoward circumstances—though vested in the habiliments of a common mortality, "tempted," according to the apostle, "in all points like as we are;" yet, through struggle, effort and aspiration, he so grew into holy relations with the All-perfect, that he ultimately came into a reciprocal oneness with the Father, walking and talking daily with the angels. This is possible to all. "He that believeth on me"—that is, he who comes into harmony with the Christ-principle of love and truth, "the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than *these* (said Jesus), for I go unto my Father."

None of the apostles, save the loving, trusting John, comprehended his heaven-inspired sayings. Often they could not bear his strange love-words, so radical, and yet so aflame with the conserving fires of divine wisdom. His practical teachings embodied *universal* love, justice, charity, and forgiveness.

"In every deed, in every thought,
He lived the precepts which he taught."

Caring nothing for the cowardly—"What will the people say?" he went forth a "sower" of principles, "without where to lay his head." He left no writings, no creeds, no codes, no formal rules of life, nor fossil forms of worship. All this business belonged to the Pharisees and hypocrites of his time. He talked of no "trinity," no "total depravity" nor "vicarious atonement." These credal matters belong to Roman Catholics and aping Protestants. He authorised no form of faith, instituted no baptismal ceremonies, ordained no cowed priests, nor established any external church. But, thrilled with that *universal religion* which pertains to the consciousness of the race, he worshipped God in spirit and in truth. His trust in the Infinite presence was sublime. His faith in the innate worth of human nature unbounded, his love for humanity was angelic; while *purity* was the

only guarantee he offered for seeing God. In fine, he was a *practical Spiritualist*, denounced by pious, respectable Pharisees as "mad," taunted by aristocratic conservatives because a Galilean "mechanic," and accused by others of being a "wine-bibber" and a "blasphemer," whose mouth must be stopped; and those saintly orthodox "rulers of the Pharisees" stopped his mouth with "gall and wormwood," nailed him between thieves, and crowned him with thorns.

"Men saw the thorns on Jesus' brow,
While angels saw the roses."

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIAN DOGMAS, THE MORAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS AND OF THE ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS COMPARED.

“Truth is its own best evidence, —
The witness is within.”

WHITTIER.

TRACING the Nazarene's remarkable career all through from the Bethlehem birth to the tragic death on Calvary, I see no connection—no legitimate relation—between his life and teachings and this institution in the world established by Constantine and called Christianity—a Christianity that would re-crucify Jesus in some form, were he physically upon earth to-day.

This powerful and many-headed organisation denominated Christianity, and praised by the excellent writer William Howitt, in the London *Spiritual Magazine*, is only galvanised Judaism, still narrow in conception, persecuting in spirit, and Pauline in doctrine.

The Jews were as aggressive and grasping, as selfish and clannish. The apostle Paul, circumcising Timothy, remained in most things a Hebrew to the last. He never outgrew his early Jewish education. The Christianity of this century is not of Jesus or John, but of Paul, Peter, and the Emperor Constantine. Tillotson quotes these passages from Paul to support the dogma of a sacrificial atonement and the forgiveness of sins only through the death of beast or man—a death involving blood: “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ,” &c. (Heb. ix. 13, 14.) And again, in the 22nd verse—“Without the shedding of *blood* is no remission.” These evidently have reference to the Old Testament sacrifices and willing offerings, such as the following

(Exodus xxy.) :—" And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring me an offering of . . . some badgers' skins, some rams' skins, dyed red, and some goat's hair!" What "heavenly" purpose or earthly use the Lord could have for "red rams' skins" or "goat's hair" must be quite as puzzling to spiritualists as deists.

The *Spiritual Magazine* for January has an article from the facile pen of William Howitt, under the caption of "Anti-christian Spiritualism," which, after faithful perusal, we pronounce the coolest specimen of accomplished assertion that has fallen under our eye for years. The following are illustrations:—

"It is very much the fashion now-a-days, and amongst the American Spiritualists especially, to exalt the heathen philosophers at the expense of Christ, and to place Plato, Socrates, Pythagoras, Confucius, &c., at least on the same level with him. They find in these writers an isolated spark, here and there, of the primal truth, and they would fain persuade us that these little scintillations are equal or superior to the full sun of divine truth and knowledge as seen in Christ. But what says Tertullian, who lived soon after the Greek philosophers, and within less than a century and a half after Christ? He declares that 'The Bible, this holy book, is a treasury from whence these wise men of the world, who have come since, have taken all they have left to posterity.' " *

Quoting this revengeful and impetuous Church father, Tertullian, as an authority upon any point touching the Bible, Christianity, or the heathen philosophers, would be aptly paralleled by the Rev. Dr. Manning quoting prior Popes in proof of Pius Ninth's infallibility, with the addition of laudations for their decrees against science; or such quotations might be compared to passages selected from the Koran by some red-handed Mahomedan to operate against the Greek Christians and the enlightening influences of the scholarly "Franks." It is well known that Ambrose, Augustine, Tertullian, and others of those early Church dignitaries became infected in the first centuries with the villanous idea that it was "right to lie for the sake of the Christian religion." To this end, Mosheim tells us (vol. i. p. 130), the doctrine, "that it was not only lawful, but commendable, to deceive and lie for the sake of truth and piety, early spread among the Christians of the second century." This

* *Spiritual Magazine*, Jan. 1870, p. 6.

Church historian further admits (vol. i. p. 155) that "pious frauds and impositions were among the causes of the extension of Christianity!"

As Tertullian is the principal Christian author referred to by "W. H." in praise of Christianity, Christian Spiritualism *versus* "Anti-Christian Spiritualism," it may be well to inquire into the spirit and religious tendencies of this early Christian champion. After manifesting his hate in various ways towards those scholarly Pagans whom he could not silence in discussion, he resorted to the terrors of endless hell torments as a means of intimidation. And to render his exhortations more effective, he turned, by "faith," to the attractive and fascinating spectacle he hoped to enjoy of seeing these "heathen philosophers" in hell.

"What," he exclaimed, "shall be the magnitude of that scene! How shall I wonder? How shall I laugh? How shall I rejoice? How shall I triumph when I behold so many and such illustrious kings, who were said to have mounted into heaven, groaning with Jupiter, their god, in the lowest darkness of hell! Then shall the soldiers who had persecuted the name of Christ burn in more cruel fire than any they had kindled for the saints. . . . Then shall the tragedians pour forth in their own misfortune more piteous cries than those with which they had made the theatre to resound, while the comedian's powers shall be better seen as he becomes more flexible by the *heat*. . . . Compared with such spectacles, with such subjects of triumph as these, What can prætor or consul, quæstor or pontiff afford? and even now faith can bring them near, and imagination can depict them as present." *

The Rev. Dr. Middleton (in preface to "Free-Inquiry," pp. 31, 32) makes the following admission:—

"I have shown, by many indisputable facts, that the ancient fathers . . . were extremely *credulous* and *superstitious*; possessed with *strong prejudices* and an enthusiastic zeal, in favour, not only of Christianity in general, but of every particular doctrine which a wild imagination could engraft upon it; and *scrupling no art or means* by which they might propagate the same principles. In short, that *they were of a character, from which nothing could be expected that was candid and impartial*; nothing but what a weak or crafty understanding could supply, towards confirming those prejudices with which they happened to be possessed; especially where religion was the subject, which above all other motives strengthens every bias and inflames every passion of the human mind. And

* Tertull. De Spectac., ch. xxx.

that this was actually the case, I have shown by many instances; in which we find them *roundly affirming as true*, things evidently *false and fictitious*; in order to strengthen, as they fancied, the evidences of the Gospel; or to *serve a present turn* of confuting an adversary."

Such, upon orthodox testimonies, are the characteristics of the Christian fathers, whom "Christian Spiritualists" seek to exalt above Plato and Socrates, Apollonius, and Aristides. Vadiscus, treating of the Christian fathers and Roman bishops, says, "they traded in three things—the grace of Christ, the dignities of the Church, and women." This hot-headed zealot, Tertullian, declared that he himself should "rejoice" and "exult" and "laugh" when he witnessed the Pagans writhing in the "lowest darkness of hell." Such a man is morally incapable of forming a just judgment of those who may conscientiously differ from him, as did those classic Platonists of the first centuries.

They (the American Spiritualists) find in these heathen writers an "isolated spark of primal truth," writes our friend William Howitt. Permit us to say—promising the proof if demanded—that they find in those so-called "heathen" philosophers, flourishing before the Christian era, not only "sparks" and "little scintillations," but brilliant flames of truth—aye more, they find on the golden pages of the ancient philosophers and the Platonic masters *all* the divine principles and doctrinal truths afterwards uttered by Jesus, the Syrian Saviour. Only in combination and illustration was the Nazarene original.

Few men know better than "W. H." that those intuitive truths and moral precepts that bubbled up from the living sensitive soul, and dropped like pearls from the inspired lips of Jesus, were the frequent enunciations of that common consciousness which relates to the universal religion of the races. The immortality of the soul taught in the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," and the Brahminical "Vedas," shone with increased brightness in the matchless sayings of Pythagoras and Socrates, Thales, Zeno, Plato, Anaximenes, Empedocles, Persian magi, and Indian sages long before the birth of the Asian teacher, Jesus. This will not be denied. On the other hand, if there is a doleful book in existence relating to immor-

talities and the future life, it is the Old Testament, a part of the Christian Scriptures. Bishop Warburton, and other candid church writers, admit the absence of all allusion to a future life in the Mosaic system. The book of Job is a drama. The oft-quoted passage, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c., gives not a hint even of a future conscious existence. Rightly translated from the Septuagint it reads thus:—

"For I know that he is eternal who is about to deliver me on earth, to restore this skin of mine which endures these things; for by the Lord these things have been done to me, of which I am conscious, to myself, which mine own eye hath seen, and not another, but all was fulfilled in my own bosom."*

Consider the following Bible texts:—

"The dead praise not the Lord."—*David*.

"They sleep with their fathers."—*Moses*.

"Whose end is destruction."—*Paul*.

"There is no work nor device nor knowledge in the grave."—*Ecclesiastes*.

"For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope; for a living dog is better than a dead lion! The dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love and their hatred is now perished."—*Ecclesiastes* ix. 4-6.

Isaiah evinces an equal destitution of faith in future life and resurrection when he says—

"They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise."—*Isaiah* xxvi. 14.

"As the cloud is consumed and vanishes away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more." Job expresses his lack in future hope by such disconsolate expressions as, "If I wait the grave is mine house, I have made my bed in darkness. I have said to corruption, thou art my father; to the worm, thou art my mother, and my sister. And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?" (*Job* xvii. 13-15.) He inquires, "If a man die shall he live again? man giveth up the ghost and where is he!"—*Job* xiv. 10.

"They shall be as though they had not been."—*Obadiah*.

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth the beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other,—yea, they have all one breath, so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; all go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."—*Ecclesiastes* iii. 19, 20.

* Weymes' Job and his Times, ch. xiii.

Saddened, weighed down by these Biblical texts, is it strange that the Christian Watts sung—

“The living know that they must die,
But all the dead forgotten lie;
Their memory and their sense are gone,
Alike unknowing and unknown.

“Their hatred and their love is lost,
Their envy buried in the dust;
They have no share in what is done
Beneath the circuit of the sun.”

Compare the above Bible teachings with some of the beautiful inspirations of the “Pagan philosophers” upon the subject of immortality. Max Müller, in the third of his recent lectures before the Royal Institution upon the “Science of Religion,” when treating of the most ancient religions, placed them in this order of time in the diagram: “The Turanian, the Aryan, the Semitic.” These primitive religions were ultimately reflected in the sacred books of the Chinese, Hindoos, and Hebrews. After quoting such passages from Confucius as, “Heaven knows me;” . . . “I love the *ancients* and gather from them; I pass the *truth* on,” he contended that a portion of the primitive Turanians believed in the duality of the Divine existence—heaven and earth—father and mother of all things. Others worshipped the “unitive Tien, the god of the sky and Father of All.” They also “reverenced their ancestors, believed in the immortality of the soul, and in blissful reunions in heaven with those they had known upon earth.” Herodotus thinks the Egyptians “were the first who distinctly taught that the soul of man is immortal.” That they believed in future rewards and punishments is testified by the paintings on the tombs, in which Osiris sits as judge, looking intently upon the balances weighing the “quick and the dead.” Diogenes Laertius affirms that Thales taught that “Divinity was infinite and the *souls of men* IMMORTAL.” Pythagoras, living in the sixth century before the modern era, believed in the Divine Existence and the immortality of the human soul. To this end the classical Millman declares that many of our Christian writers who repudiate this “heathen philosopher” repeat his “golden sentences,” as if they were

"originally uttered by the more learned of the Christian fathers, not knowing that those fathers enriched themselves at the expense of Pagan thought."

Zoroaster, after speaking of Ormuzd, that God who is "indestructible, eternal, indivisible, the celestial, and the dispenser of all good," adds, "The soul, being a bright fire, by the power of the Father, remains immortal, and is mistress of life." *

Crito, asking Socrates, another "Pagan philosopher," how he would be buried, the heaven-inspired philosopher smilingly answered—

" 'As you please, if only you can catch me,—if I do not escape from you.' He further said:—'I cannot persuade Crito, my friends, that I am that Socrates who is now conversing with you, and who methodizes each part of the discourse; but he thinks that I am he whom he will shortly behold dead, and asks how he should bury me. But that which I some time since argued at length, that when I have drunk the poison I shall no longer remain with you, but shall depart to some happy state of the blessed, this I seem to have argued to him in vain, though I meant at the same time to console both you and myself.' "

After arguing that the soul, being invisible, is not separable into parts, but goes into the presence at death of a good and wise God, he asks—

"Does not the soul, then, when in this state, depart to that which resembles itself, the *invisible*, the divine, immortal, and wise? and on its arrival there, is it not its lot to be happy, free from error, ignorance, fears, wild passions, and all the other evils to which human nature is subject, and, as is said of the initiated, does it not in truth pass the rest of its time with the gods?"

"When, therefore, death approaches a man, the mortal part of him, as it appears, dies, but the immortal part departs safe and uncorrupted, having withdrawn itself from death."

"The soul, therefore," he said, "Cebes, is most certainly immortal and imperishable."

Cicero, born 106 B.C., teaches in one of his works, written just after his daughter's death, these beautiful truths:—

"The origin of the soul of man is not to be found upon earth, for there is nothing in the soul of a mixed or carnate nature, or that has any appearance of being made out of the earth. The powers of memory, understanding, and thought imply that these

* *Euseb. Præp. Evan.*, lib. i. 10.

principles must have been derived from God. . . . Do not consider yourself, but your body, to be mortal. For you are not the being which this corporeal figure evinces; but the mind of every man is the man, and not that form which may be delineated with a finger. Know, therefore, that you are a divine person. Since it is divinity that has consciousness, sensation, memory, and foresight,—that governs, regulates, and moves that body over which it has been appointed, just as the Supreme Deity rules this world; and in like manner, as an eternal God guides this world, which in some respect is perishable, so an eternal spirit animates your frail body. The good man does not die but departs, as the inextinguishable and immortal nature of his purified soul demonstrates, which goes from him into heaven, without that dissolution or corruption which death appears to induce."

Near the close of the book he writes—

"If, indeed, it should be our fate to know the time which is appointed by the gods for us to die, let us prepare ourselves for it, with a cheerful and grateful mind, thinking ourselves like men who are delivered from a jail, and released from their fetters, for the purpose of going back to our eternal habitation, which may be more emphatically called our own; or else to be divested of all sense and trouble. If, on the other hand, we should have no notice given us of this decree, yet let us cultivate such a disposition as to look on that formidable hour of death as happy for us, though shocking to our friends; and let us never imagine anything to be an evil, which is an appointment of the immortal gods, or of nature, the common Parent of All." *

Christian writers who assert that these doctrines of the divine existence, the immortality of the soul and the rewards of virtue, were derived from the "chosen people"—the Jews—manifest an ignorance only excelled by their impudence. The Fatherhood of God, enriching the Rig Veda and the Talmud, was taught also by Homer, Hesiod, Philo, Horace, Seneca, Epictetus, in the Socrates of Zenophon, the song of Cleanthes, and in the hymn of Aratus, quoted by Paul in his appeal to the Athenians. The Rev. Dr. Collyer (Lec. xii., p. 499) makes Pythagoras to say—

"God is neither the object of sense, nor subject to passion; but . . . invisible and supremely intelligent. . . . All beings receive their life from him. He is the light of heaven—the *Father of all*."

* *Tuscul. Quæst.*, lib. 1.

The brotherhood of man with the moral duties growing out of such humanitarian instruction, was taught by Diodorus, Menander, Zeno, Epictetus, Terence, the learned Philo Judæus, and others, in these words: "All men everywhere belong to one family." "No man is a stranger to me providing he be a good man; for we have all one and the same nature." "All men are our friends and fellow-citizens. . . . Greeks and barbarians drink from one and the same cup of brotherly love." "Will you not bear with your brother? He is born of the same divine seed as thou art. Wilt thou enslave those who are thy brothers by nature and children of God?" asks Epictetus.

Pythagoras after enjoining trust in God, adds—

"Yield to mild words, and to deeds that are useful. Do not hate your friend for a trifling fault. Do nothing base, either with another or in private; and most of all, have a respect for yourself. Next practise uprightness both in deed and word. And accustom yourself to have a diet simple and non-luxurious. And guard against doing that which begets envy. Do not expend beyond what is seasonable, like a person ignorant of what is honourable. Nor be illiberal. Moderation in all things is best. And do those things which will not injure you; and calculate before the act. Nor receive sleep upon your softened eyes before you have thrice gone over each act of the day, What have I passed by? What have I done? What necessary act has not been done by me? and, beginning from the first, go through them. And then, if you have acted improperly, reproach yourself; but if properly, be glad. So labour, so practise: these precepts it is meet for you to love. These will place you on the footsteps of divine virtue." *

No scholar at this stage of historic research will assume the position that Jesus was the first to voice the "golden rule." It was a common proverb among Chinese, Syrian, and Grecian thinkers before the dawn of the Christian era. These are the forms in which it was announced by Hillel, Isocrates, and Confucius:—

"Do not to another what thou wouldest not he should do to thee: this is the sum of the law."

"Thou wilt deserve to be honoured, if thou doest not thyself what thou blamest in others."

"What thou dost not wish done to thyself, do not do to others."

In the Rev. J. Williams' work upon the "*Bards' Druidic*"

* Greek Anth.

Creed," treating of the religion of the ancient Britons several hundred years before Christ, occur these Druid teachings:—

"Three things evince what God has done and will do: infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite love.

"The three divine qualities of man, are liberality, love, and forgiveness of injuries."

"The three great laws of man's actions, are what they forbid in another, what they require from another, and what they care not how is done by others."

Monsignor Bigandet, Catholic Apostolic Bishop of Ava, in his "*Life of Buddha*," says:—

"It must not be deemed rash to assert that most of the moral truths prescribed by the Gospel are to be met with in the Buddhist scriptures;" while elsewhere this Roman prelate writes: "In the particulars of the life of Buddha-Gautama, it is impossible not to feel reminded of many features of our Saviour's character and course."

Will any one, assuming the superior title of "Christian" Spiritualist, specify one—just one—"primal truth" that flashed upon the world for the first time through the instrumentality of Jesus Christ?

Touching the sweeping assertion that American Spiritualists seek to "exalt the heathen philosophers at the expense of Christ," for one I plead extenuation,—aye, more, positive suspension of all such harsh judgments. These better become the spirit of Calvinism than Spiritualism. Ignoring the three gods of the Trinitarians, the thirty thousand gods of the Grecians, and all formal hero-worship, the masses of American spiritualists believe in God—the *very God* and Father that Jesus believed in and worshipped. And believing this God impartial and inspiration universal, they cherish a becoming reverence for all such epoch men of India and Egypt, of Palestine and Greece, of past and present times, as prove themselves truly anointed of Heaven. Precious in memory as hallowed of song are the associations and spiritual illuminations clustering around Syria.

"With the eye of a spirit I look on that shore,
Where pilgrim and spirit have lingered before;
With the glide of a spirit I traverse that sod,
Made bright by the steps of the angels of God."

It is quite fashionable with narrow segmentary Sectarists and certain Spiritualists to continually denounce the heathen philosophers and their methods of worship. We take pleasure in turning such over to the tender mercies of the candid, yet soundly orthodox, Rev. J. B. Gross, who, in his *Introduction to Heathen Religion*, says:—

“Perhaps on no subject within the ample reign of human knowledge have so many fallacious ideas been propagated as upon that of the gods and the worship of heathen antiquity. Nothing but a shameful ignorance, a pitiable prejudice, or the contemptible pride, which denounces all investigations as a useless or a criminal labour, when it must be feared that they will result in the overthrow of pre-established systems of faith or the modification of long-cherished principles of science, can have thus misrepresented the theology of heathenism, and distorted—nay, caricatured—its forms of religious worship. It is time that posterity should raise its voice in vindication of violated truth, and that the present age should learn to recognise in the hoary past at least a little of that common sense of which it boasts with as much self-complacency as if the prerogative of reason was the birthright only of modern times.”

On the eighth page of the *Spiritual Magazine*, for January, 1870, may be found this paragraph:—

“Spiritualists complain loudly of the public hostility to their doctrines, but they have only themselves—or a large section of themselves—to blame for it. By the extravagance of their dogmas, and the wild immorality of some of their social innovations, they have struck a deadly blow at their own glorious dispensation. Had it been destructible in its nature, they would assuredly have destroyed it. By their licentious free-loverism, by citing the teaching of spirits to violate the sanctity of marriage, to declare the non-existence of evil, though its desolation and ruins lie awfully all around us, and by their ignorant attacks on all established faiths, by the loathsome dogma of re-incarnation,* and the advocacy of heathenism, they have caused sober and reflective people to start back and stand aloof. By the weak avidity with which they have accepted, not only in America, but here also, such of them whose want of opportunity in youth precluded much historic and critical research, whatever spirits told them, merely because they were

* To get correct notions of the doctrine of Re-incarnation, we take pleasure in referring the reader to that series of able articles by Miss Anna Blackwell, now publishing in *Human Nature*. This lady's learned and logical exposition of French Spiritism is exciting deep interest on both continents.

spirits, and that unsupported by an atom of proof, they have scandalised the good and disgusted the well-informed."

This, the judgment of an avowed Spiritualist, pronounced upon millions of brother spiritualists is—expressing no opinion at present of its truth or wisdom—a fearful piling up of agonies and indiscriminate charges. Spiritualists are not perfect. Few, if any, religious persuasions, profess to have attained absolute holiness. In our judgment, however, based upon a long experience in religious institutions, the spiritualists of America, at least, are as respectable and quite as honourable as the same number of individuals constituting any religious body in the country. Averse to hollow pretensions, and remembering Jesus's rebuke to the self-righteous Pharisee, they are cautious of saying to others—"Stand by, for I am holier than thou."

While for the erring we have more charity than condemnation, none more deeply regret than ourself "extravagance of dogmas," "wild immoralities," and all practices savouring of "licentious free-loverism," whether occurring in the ranks of Christian* clergymen, credal church members, or in communities of professed spiritualists. No pen has more severely censured all such social crudities than ours. But what is exceedingly unfortunate for these statements in the above paragraph, taken in connection with the caption to the paper—"Anti-christian Spiritualism"—nearly every outrageous case of wild, wicked sensualism, or overt looseness in the line of moral action has, so far as our knowledge extends, been perpetrated by those arrogating to themselves the name of "Christian" Spiritualists. And what is more, they have justified their shameful proceedings, not by what "spirits taught them," but by the

* The term "Christian" is no recommendation. The Rev. Mr. Bush, a Calvinistic Baptist, under whose pulpit efforts we were "hopefully converted," departed for coasts unknown, soon after the close of the revival, taking with him his servant girl, and leaving a wife and four children to the charities of the very unbelievers and infidels whom he had threatened with eternal damnation. This chilled to ice our budding Christianity. The frost lingers. A gentleman connected with the secular Press in Charlestown (Mass.), U. S., A., has a list which, with one of ours, enumerates full *three hundred* Christian clergymen who have been arrested for misdemeanours and criminal offences. I repeat, the appellation, "Christian," is no recommendation to an individual or a nation.

teachings of the Bible, the examples of the patriarchs, and other Scriptural characters often held up for imitation.

The parties brought into the courts of New Jersey awhile since, charged with indecent personal exposures, pled in extenuation the purity of Adam and Eve in the garden; and further declared that, "celestially converted," they had become "like unto the little children" commended of Jesus, and were entitled to the uppermost seats in the "kingdom of heaven." Civil law in America thought differently, and measured out the usual penalties.

Though belonging to an estimable family, Judge R——'s sister-in-law was psychologised and inveigled into disreputable relations by a roving iconoclast, pretending to be under the divine control of Jesus Christ, and authorised, as the centre of the "golden circle," to celebrate the "marriage supper of the Lamb." The sequel is too shocking to contemplate. When arraigned, he cited, in connection with figurative passages from the Apocalypse, the second and third verses of the twentieth chapter of Isaiah, where the Lord commanded the prophet to unloose the "sackcloth from his loins," and take the shoes from his feet. And he did so, "walking naked and barefoot for three years for a sign and a wonder."

Reaching England last summer, one of the first posters attracting our attention read in this wise—

"LECTURES! from the Universal Central Congress of Celestials under God, and the World's Congress of Pure Spirits under Jesus, through and by DR. C. PINKHAM, D.D."

The remainder of the handbill was far more swollen in style. In a little pamphlet by this "D.D.," he says, page 10, under the head of "Christian Saints:"—

"Between August 1867 and 1870, Christ will remove his chosen bands, of 144,900 (Rev. vii., xiv., 1 to 6, 14 to 20—Matt. xxv. 1 to 13), to the remote regions of the United States, principally to California; and what is (?) not taken by the ordinary modes of travelling, will be entranced and caught up, and taken over through the air."

Is it strange that American spiritualists, especially the more cultured, look with suspicion upon the pompous assumptions common to "Christian" spiritualists? The following paragraphs

are from the pen of our friend William Howitt, found in the January number of the *Spiritual Magazine*:—

“Our American brethren direct us also to the East, for a proof of the mere modern and mythic character of Christianity—that only religion in the world which possesses a clear and connected historic basis, unequivocal, positive, and predominant over all myth and fable, running from the creation until now. Mr. Peebles, in his *Seers of the Ages*, tells us that ‘the historic Jesus is copied from the Crishna of India, &c., and that the close and almost perfect parallelisms between the Crishna of the *Bhagavat Gita* and the Christ of the Gospels is sufficient evidence that one was borrowed from the other, or that they were both copies from some older myth.’

“Now certainly no man well acquainted with the ancient theology of the Hindoos could for a moment doubt which of these relations was borrowed from the other, if there were such a borrowing. In the one case we have in the Bible a plain, clear, uninterrupted history from the very earliest era of history down to the time of Christ, in which the founder of Christianity is most unequivocally and luminously heralded and graphically described, his person, his career, and his doctrine. This is done, not by one prophet, but by a score, all living in succession; and, therefore, incapable of together concocting such a story. These prophets prove their mission to be genuine by simultaneously prophesying the fates of all the nations surrounding them, and some of those nations then the most powerful in the world.

“These gentlemen lay much stress on the assertion that some of the Indian resemblances to Christian facts are much prior to the Christian era. Suppose this to be actually so, the fact remains that the predictions of Christ, and of the incidents of his earthly life, also stood fixed thousands of years in the Hebrew Scriptures before he himself came; and it is much more likely that in the intercourse known to have existed between the eastern nations for thousands of years before Christianity, the Hindoos and others should have received, through their learned men, knowledge of these wonderful predictions, than that the Hebrews should have gleaned them from theirs so mixed with fantastic fable. The whole history of the Jews, so proud of their superior knowledge, so exclusive in their character, is wholly opposed to the idea of such a borrowing, and in the whole Hebrew history there is no trace of any such infusion from the far East. . . .

“I observe that our friend, Mr. Peebles, in his *Seers of the Ages*, rests too much on the *Anacalypsis* of Godfrey Higgins, a work in which there is the most constant straining to draw Christianity from the fragmentary passages of Hindoo mythology rather than from the full and positive records of the Jews themselves. Mr.

Peebles and the Americans of that school do injustice to their own intellectual acumen in relying on the interested patchwork of Higgins to produce a caricature of Christ, rather than on the authentic annals of Christ's own people. Besides, who, on reading himself the story of Crishna in the *Bhagavat Gita*, a philosophic poem, or in the *Vishnu Purana*, can recognise the pretended identity of that god with Christ?

"Whatever may be the date or the character of the myths of India, Christ is no mythical, but an absolute and altogether historical personage. His history stands in plainest terms in the book which is as much the matter-of-fact history of the Jews as the history of England is of the English. It is not the fable of a fabled people. That people exists amongst us and the other modern nations to-day; it exists in fulfilment of the same age-long chain of prophecies which foretold and attested Christ. On every page of that history, from its first to its last, stands the declarations of the coming of Christ; and when he did come it was no obscure or mythical age, but in a comparatively modern period, amid the blaze of Greek and Roman civilisation, which attest, in fullest evidence, his life, death, and eternal doctrines.

"To attempt to reduce to a level with pagan writers or with Eastern mythical deities, this divine man, with whom all the prior ages are filled by anticipation, and all the subsequent ones by the light and life and civilisation springing from his Gospel, is a perversion of intellect, only to be accounted for by the influence of those lying spirits, who were announced as the dark deceivers of these latter times.

"These (referring to quotations from Max Muller) are the carefully recorded sentiments of men who have not dipped merely into Godfrey Higgins, or into any other second-hand sources of intelligence, but have long and laboriously probed the depths of the accumulated records of Eastern thought, mythology, and history. Is it likely that we shall turn from following such guides to listen to any living spirits who, from a pagan Hades, solicit us to re-adopt their obsolete creed, as is the manner of Andrew Jackson Davis and his school? We are not likely to abandon the convictions of our own judgments of what is really historic and really divine for demon announcements devoid of any evidence whatever. Christianity is the religion of all the greatest men and women of ancient and of modern times," &c.

Few will fail to observe that these extracts, copious in verbiage, exhaustive in expression, and, withal, literally staggering under a burden of rhetoric and rhapsody, are rather unwarranted affirmations and glittering generalities, than solid, convincing arguments. Assertions quite to the contrary, with the proofs, can, and *have* been made by truly great and good men

When solutions of important religious problems are involved, evidences, cogent reasonings, and the highest historic testimonies should be relied upon for conviction, rather than dogmatical assumptions. Theological thinkers, as well as scientists of the positive school, are continually calling for proofs—"Your proofs, Sir!"

None shall bear the palm away from us in appreciation of Mr. Howitt's fine social qualities and distinguished abilities as writer and author. His good words for reform; his brave manly utterances in behalf of unpopular truths are worthy of all honour. Facing the English press and pulpit, he lent his influential name to Spiritualism, when championship in that direction cost something in conservative Britain. These seeds did not all fall on stony ground. Harvest fields are ripening. Recording angels have written upon his forehead—"faithful." Saying all this in sincerity, we beg to kindly suggest, however, that a diction less assertive, and a spirit more broad and Catholic, would, in the estimation of many admirers, greatly enhance the value of his contributions to Spiritualist literature. In a highly inspired moment the apostle declared that "*charity*" was a heavenly grace of more importance than "faith" or hope.

The allegations of Mr. Howitt that Godfrey Higgins in his *Anacalypsis* indulged in a "constant straining," or engaged in "interested patchwork" to maintain his parallels between *Chrishna* and *Christ*, are simply statements devoid of a vestige of proof. Certainly, a man who, in Godfrey Higgins's time, would make the journey to Rome to consult original manuscripts in the Vatican, should hardly be charged with "second-hand sources of intelligence." In correspondence at present with a venerable citizen in Yorkshire, relating to the private Life of Higgins, his works, such as "The Sabbath," the "Life of Mahomet," "Celtic Druids," "Anacalypsis,"* &c., I find that he was not only an inde-

* Those anxious to thoroughly probe this matter of the parallelisms with cognate subjects, should consult, in connection with the *Anacalypsis*, Cippus on the Rabbinical Philosophers, Townley's Collection of Brahminical Antiquities, Viscount Valentia on Ancient Ceylon, the "Round Towers of Ireland," the works of the Rev. Mr. Maurice, Balæus, M. Denon, and others.

pendent thinker and a sound scholar; but an English gentleman, occupying a high social position. Though under the ban of the the Established Church for his writings, none disputed the purity of his life, or dared to impugn his motives; neither have secularists or Christian Spiritualists from that day to the present, refuted his arguments relating to the origin of the various religions of the world.

“Strange that the very men who boldly fight
For truths which they have grasped, should still deny
The lamp of reason, with her guiding light,
To others who have ventured up on high,
And in their soarings have a region gained,
Which they in all their flights have not attained.”

If the “incidents of Christ’s life stood fixed for thousands of years in the Hebrew Scriptures before he came,” and, if “the Bible is a plain, clear, uninterrupted history, from the very earliest era of history down to the time of Christ, in which the founder of Christianity is most unequivocally and luminously heralded and graphically described, his person, his career, and his doctrine,” as Mr. Howitt affirms, nothing could have been easier than to have pointed out these scriptural texts. May we not yet look for a full list at an early day?

Dr. Eckerman, Dr. George S. Clarke, and other eminent divines candidly admit, that (saying nothing of the Apocrypha) the canonical-voted books of the Old Testament, contain no clear prophecy of the person of Jesus Christ (*Class Jour.* vol. 33). Dr. Adam Clarke, the distinguished Methodist commentator, contends that the prophecy of Isaiah—“A virgin shall conceive and bear a son,” and “call his name Immanuel,” does not refer to Christ; but to *Isaiah’s own son*.” Dr. Clarke further observes:—

“It is humbly apprehended that the young woman, usually called the virgin, is the same with the prophetess, and Immanuel is to be named by his mother, the same with the prophet’s son, whom he was ordered to name,” &c. (*Class Jour.*, vol. i. p. 637.)

The Rev. Dr. Arnold remarks that—

“We find throughout the New Testament references made to various passages in the Old Testament, which are alleged as prophetic of Christ. Now, if we turn to the context of these passages,—says he—and endeavour to discover their meaning, accord-

ing to sound principles of interpretation, it will often appear that they do not relate to the Messiah, or to Christian times; but to some particular circumstance in the life of the writer, or the Jewish nation." (*Pref. Ser. Int. of Prophecy*, p. 1.)

Take this passage:—Matthew says that Jesus dwelt in Egypt for a time, that it might be fulfilled—"Out of Egypt have I called my son." If the reader will turn to the prophet Hosea, he will find that it was not of Jesus, but of *Israel*, that this prophecy was written.

Again—"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, . . . and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." In all the writings of Jeremiah no such passage occurs—*nothing* even approximating it.

The evangelist Matthew says that Jesus abode at Nazareth under divine guidance—"that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene." Not one of the prophets, whose writings are recorded in the Canon, foretold that Jesus should be called a "Nazarene."—*Not one*. Some of the prophecies in the Old Testament are contradictory. Others have never been fulfilled. Pashur, the priest, put Jeremiah into the stocks for his false prophecies (Jer. xx. 1, 7). The best orthodox chronologists do not agree among themselves as to the time of the prophetic utterances, and then we have no independent evidence as to the period when the prophecies were written down and booked. Interested churchal testimony upon this point is accepted only at a liberal discount. That there were general, yet dimly defined prophetic annunciations, streaming from the lips of the mediumistic Hebrew seers, concerning coming teachers and a future era of spiritual illumination to their nation, is, on the one hand admitted, and on the other, the expression is ventured, that it is exceedingly questionable whether there is a single well-defined prophecy in the Old Testament relating to the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Asia Minor—all mountainous countries abound in seers—nations peopling highlands especially, have in all ages had their

prophets. Prophecy like inspiration—like Deity Life, is universal. God is not partial—does not deal in patchwork specialisms, and has not—nor never had, a "chosen people."

Prophecy, in perfect consonance with the law of cause and effect, is not a supernatural gift. Exalted spirits, standing with vision unsealed upon the plane of causes, see certain operative forces at work in the realm of the spiritual and under the providence of God, judging of the results, they impress such media as they can reach to externalise and announce these results. The announcements are termed prophecies. That Biblical prophets foretold the destinies of nations surrounding the Jews is not only possible, but very probable—so the Erythrean Spill foretold the destruction of Troy—and what of it? What had the prophecy to do with the religion of the Greeks? Canute, during a great feast in Frola, prophesied of the French Revolution and the overthrow of the ancient knigly government. There is evidence that he even went so far as to specify the particular Anches that should befall some of the participants in that revolution which dethroned Louis XVI, the most kind-hearted of all the Bourbons.

During the latter decades of the 18th century there resided in New York, one Oliver Evans, blessed with remarkable prophetic powers. He was accused of being dreamy and strange at times. Years before Robert Fulton tried a solitary successful experiment, he predicted the application of steam to the propelling of machinery. In about 1785, twenty-two years, certainly, before Fulton ran his first boat on the Hudson, this Mr. Evans constructed his very singular model, under a strong prophetic inspiration. The world steeped in materialism persecuted him. Mocked and considered by Mechanical Scientists as mad, he prophesied in these words:—

"The time will come when people will travel in stages, moved by steam engines, from one part of the country to another, almost as fast as birds—fifteen or twenty miles an hour. Railways will be laid, nearly horizontal, made of wood or iron. These engines will also propel boats twelve miles an hour. There will be hundreds of boats running on the Mississippi; but the velocity of boats through the water will not be equal to that of carriages through

the air, as the resistance of water is much greater than that of air."

Hong, the good Quaker, many, many years ago, with several American media still upon the stage of action, prophesied correctly of our fratricidal war and its results in the direction of emancipation long before those armed hosts from North and South met in deadly conflict. But who would quote these prophecies and their fulfilment, as proofs of the truth of any religion?

Forgetting for the moment the prejudiced and sect-demented, it seems impossible for one versed in oriental literature to read the life of the Indian Christna in the "Sacred Song," a fragment of that large work, the "Mahabarata," sometimes spoken of as the Fifth Veda, in connection with the life of Jesus as narrated in the Synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of Nicodemus, Thomas's Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, the First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, &c., and fail of discovering remarkable similarities in those teachers. It may be said—These Gospels mentioned are not authentic. The reply is—Majorities do not constitute truth, nor change eternal principles; neither could the votes of bigoted Bishops in Constantinian Councils make or *unmake* Gospels canonical.

Seldom has an ecclesiastical historian, or scholarly theologian, had the nerve to dispute the fact of the Christian Fathers borrowing largely from Christna to dress up their "God-man," making him more presentable to the incipient Christian civilisations of Greece and Rome. The Rev. Jeremiah Jones, whose orthodoxy was never questioned, conscious that those fathers and bishops were none too *good* to do this, avers that "pious frauds were common among the Christians." Christna preceded Christ by hundreds of years. In a discourse by this incarnate God, Christna, to Arjuna, that disciple whom he loved, he gave the reason for his incarnation in these words:—

"Although I am not in my nature subject to birth or decay, and am the Lord of all created beings; yet, having command over my own nature, I am made evident by my own powers; and, as often as there is a decline of virtue, and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world, I make myself evident; and thus I appear

from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of virtue."—*Bhagavat-Gita*.

The disagreeable traditions that Mr. Howitt mentions in the *Spiritual Magazine* as related of Chrishna—"Playing pranks with Indra"—"mocking the elders"—"lifting the mountain into the air"—"slaying a demon," and others much more absurd and extravagant, are equalled if not outdone by Jesus, who is reported to have exclaimed when in his cradle—"Mary, I am Jesus, the Son of God." It is also said that by divine power he prevented "his swaddling clothes from being burned"—that he caused "devils to come out of the mouth of a post boy, and fly away in the shape of crows and serpents"—that he restored to "human form a man who had been bewitched and transformed into the appearance of a mule," and that he manifested upon one occasion, when a lad, sufficient supernatural strength to add by a word, "two spans to the appointed measure of Joseph's throne," and moulding birdling "forms from clay, they flew away into the air full of glee and music." These Gospels, especially the "First Gospel of the Infancy," in which these and other narrations are found, were believed to be canonical by a sect of Christians called the Gnostics, and by a distinguished class of churchmen characterising the second century. Among these was St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who suffered martyrdom about A.D. 202. Many of the more important narrations in the "Infancy Gospels" were credited in the subsequent years by such Christian writers as Eusebius, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, and others. Considered in the light of the present, those "alleged miracles," wild and extravagant, attributed to both Chrishna and Christ, can be regarded by men of sound judgment as hardly more than exaggerations and oriental picture-writing, conceived and shaped to edify the superstitious, rather than enlighten the world.

Speaking of the "literature of India," "W. H." informs us in the *Spiritual Magazine*, that "Some of the greatest authorities, such as Max Müller, tell us that probably these mystical, rather than historic productions, may be as old as the Hebrew history." If our critic had quoted the identical words of the justly-distinguished Max Müller the allusion would have been

more satisfactory. Not a published sentence of this prince of linguists is allowed to escape our notice. Treating of the most ancient of the four Vedas, the Professor says :—

“The Veda has a two-fold interest; it belongs to the history of the world, and to the history of India. In the history of the world the Veda fills a gap which no literary work in any other language could fill. It carries us back to times of which we have no other records, and gives us the very words of a generation of men, of whom otherwise we could form but the vaguest estimate by means of conjectures and inferences. As long as man continues to take an interest in the history of his race, and as long as he collects in libraries and museums the relics of former ages, the first place in that long row of books which contain the records of the Aryan branch of mankind will belong for ever to the *Rig Veda*.”

Max Müller further argues that whatever may be the age of the Veda, in one sense at least it is the “*oldest book in existence*,” ante-dating the “Homerick Poems,” because representing “an earlier phase of human thought and feeling.” Comparing the Hebrew with the Sanscrit, he declares that “every learned man knows that the *Hebrew* was *not*, as Jerome and other Church Fathers taught, the oldest, or primitive language of mankind.” In the first of his late lectures before the members of the Royal Institution upon the “Science of Religion,” he distinctly affirmed that “the common opinion that the worship of one God, and other reasonable theories connected with the primitive Pagan religions, were derived from the Jews, *was an exploded idea*.” How long will the clergy and those in their interests continue to repeat this “exploded idea?”

Only by duly considering the fearful infatuation of early churchal influences do we get a clue at the indiscriminate laudations of the Bible—even the Old Testament portions—that so constantly characterise the writings of certain English Spiritualists. This contributor to the *Spiritual Magazine*, without hesitation or the least qualification, brings before us and evidently endorses the following passage from Tertullian :—

“The Bible, this holy book, is a treasury from whence these wise men of the world, who have come since, have taken all they have left to posterity.”

Does our worthy friend believe the “Bible, this holy book,”

King James' version, to be divinely and *plenarily* inspired? Does he accept it as the authoritative, the final, and infallible word of God? Is this the position? Or does he not entertain the more philosophical opinion that the Old Testament books at least are but the unsystematised narrations of disjointed theories, ceremonies, and uncertain prophecies of the Hebrews,* who, originally slaves in Egypt, and outcasts from the higher civilizations of the East in after periods, are fitly represented to-day in the mammon streets of traffic and the clothing shops of our cities? Does he look upon the "Hebrew Scriptures" as eminently moral in tone and progressive in tendency?

No one better understands that there is not an apologist for Capital Punishment in England or America but flies to the Bible for arguments and examples. This is equally true of those advocating war and all forms of human bloodshed and butchery. The Mormons of Utah justify their polygamy by the commands of God and the practices of the Patriarchs. The slave-holding clergymen in the more Southern of the American States hurled holy texts from Moses and the Prophets at the heads of Channing and Garrison, for advocating freedom and the universality of human rights.

Consider these commands, attributed to the Deity:—

"And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out throughout the camp, and *slay* every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour." (Ex. xxxi. 27.)

"The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, saying, whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, is lame, or hath a broken hand, or a flat nose, or a crooked back, or a defective eye, shall not approach to offer the bread of the Lord." (Lev. xxi. 16-20.)

"Joshua smote all the country and all their kings, he left *none remaining*, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded." (Joshua x. 40.)

"Now go (said Samuel to Saul) and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep." (1 Sam. xv. 3.)

"But of the cities of those people which the Lord thy God doth

* Diodorus, giving an account of the Jewish religion (in a "Fragment of the 34th Book," p. 901), says "The Hebrews were driven out of Egypt as *impious men*." Tacitus, and other authors, corroborate the above testimony.

give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; but thou shalt utterly destroy them, namely, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee." (Deut. xx. 16, 17.)

"And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians. . . . And he (the Lord) *took off their chariot wheels*, that they drave them heavily; so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians." (Ex. xiv. 25, 26.)

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, *Fear not*, neither be thou dismayed; take all the people of war with thee, and arise and go up to Ai. . . . For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. And so it was, that all who fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai." (Josh. viii. 1, 26.)

"The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people. . . . And Moses sent them to war a thousand of every tribe; and they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses, and they slew all the males. . . . And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? . . . Now, therefore, kill every *male* among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves." (Num. xxxi. 1-18.)

Though the joys of Paradise were the forfeit, I could not believe that God, the Infinite God and Father of our spirits, whose name is Love, "ever spoke to Moses," commanding him to slay everything that breathed, to destroy poor helpless old men, and mercilessly put to the sword the women and the little children of the land—just such little children, perhaps, as Jesus took in his arms and blessed, saying, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

This fiendish war against the Midianites was purely aggressive. The only possible reason conceivable was the suspicion and jealousy of Moses. And could anything be more infernal than such brutal transactions—such wholesale slaughter of women and children? And yet it is *all* represented as commanded and sanctioned of Him who is the source of all purity and holiness! It may be said "the age was barbarous"—*granted*, but that is no extenuating consideration, especially if the

Patriarchs and Moses were supernaturally acquainted with the one eternal God, and under his special guidance and inspiration. In fact, the circumstances, if true, afford less excuse for their wickedness.

The renowned ecclesiastical historian and theologian, Dr. Mosheim, says:—"One thing, indeed, appears at first sight very remarkable, that the variety of religions and gods in the heathen world neither produced *wars* nor *dissensions among the different nations*." It must be transparent to the eye of an impartial observer, that the wars which so strongly marked the history of the Israelites was in consequence of Moses claiming to be dictated by a Deity whom he significantly termed a "*man of war*." This deific intelligence, or "Lord," who addressed Moses in such dictatorial tones, was evidently an immortalised spirit of Egyptian birth and education, who, though in the world of spirits, was neither in the spiritual nor celestial worlds. He confessed himself upon one occasion "*a jealous God*."* Heaven is condition, rather than locality. This controlling spirit, Jehovah, restless and "repenting," was still ranging that undeveloped war-plain of antagonisms, that obtain in the less elevated conditions of spirit-life.

Naturally jealous and ambitious, Moses was a fit medium for just such a spirit's manifestations and murderous commands. As a general rule, like attracts like. To be principled in the love of *good* is more divine than to be principled in truth.

* The Gnostic Christians taught that the Jehovah, who talked "face to face with Moses, as a man speaketh with his friend," was simply "an angel." St. Austin makes this candid admission—"The angel who spake to Moses called himself Jehovah" (3rd lib., ch. ii., p. 23). In Judges ii. 1, this spiritual intelligence, the Jehovah of the Jews, is termed an "angel," who said, "I made you to go up out of Egypt, and I will never break my covenant with you." The family God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, ultimately enlarged into the *national* God of the Israelites. There is no reason to suppose that Moses, versed in the learning of the Egyptians, disbelieved in the existence of other gods. The existence and power of rival deities is rather admitted by him than denied. Moses merely claims that Jehovah is superior to all others. "Who is like unto Thee, Jehovah, among the gods?" (Ex. xv. 11, and also Ex. xviii. 14.) Moses represents him to Pharaoh, by Jehovah's own command, as the "God of the Hebrews," and not as the Supreme, the Infinite God of the universe.

God is love. The law of progress pertains to all worlds—all periods of time. The Divine effort, here and everywhere, is educative and redemptive. Disciplined with other “spirits in prison,” and made more “perfect through suffering,” Moses in after centuries appeared upon the Mount of Transfiguration, clothed in the angel-vestures of beauty and blessedness.

Profound men do not so much as need reminding that neither popes nor prelates, bibles nor manuscripts, are infallible; and if not infallible, then fallible and necessarily imperfect. Absolute infallibility is predicable only of God.

Bible, from the Greek *biblos*, signifies a book, and was originally referable to the barks of such trees as were appropriated for writing material. A book is divine just as far as it inculcates exalted truths and divine ideas; and fiendish if it teach falsehood, war, and wickedness. It is not the vellum, nor the label “holy,” but the ideas, that possess moral worth. Inspiration is universal. All *books* past and present are sacred, just so far as their pages are filled with chaste sentiments and heaven-inspiring principles.

Several books of the Hebrew Scriptures, certainly six in number, have been utterly lost. The Old Testament writers frequently allude to them.* Among the missing are the “Book of the Wars of the Lord,” the “Book of the Righteous, or Jasher,” the “Annals of the Kings of Judah and Israel,” &c. Swedenborg, in the third of his “Memorable Relations” (True Chris. rel. p. 304), tells us that when calling to mind what Moses had transcribed from the two books called the “Wars of Jehovah” and the “Enunciations” (Numb. 21), there were some angels present, who informed him that “*these books* were the ancient word,” consisting of two parts, the historic and the prophetic. These angels further assured him that this ancient Israelitish word contained the book of Jasher, mentioned in Joshua and Samuel, and was, with other of those lost books, “still preserved among the people of Great Tartary.”

Pressed by the more thinking minds of Continental Europe,

* See Numbers xxi. 14; Joshua x. 13; 1 Kings iv. 30, 32, 33; 2 Samuel i. 17 18; 2 Kings xiv. 19.

the celebrated ecclesiastical Council of Trent held numerous sessions between the years 1545 and 1563. Their discussions upon the canonical books, always energetic, were at times quite angry. Ultimately, this Council pronounced authoritative the Vulgate edition of the Bible. It includes the Apocrypha, and is considered canonical and authoritative by the Romish Church. This translation so differs, however, from King James's and others, that it conveys different meanings upon very important points of doctrine.

That King James's version, printed in 1611, contains mis-translations, interpolations, and errors geological, astronomical, and moral, none will dispute. A committee of the American Bible Union reported, several years since, that there "might be some 24,000 corrections made in this version with safety." It may not be amiss to state here that after Dr. Lardner speaks of the biblical books rejected in St. Jerome's time, he tells us that he learns from Chrysostom's works that "Jerome did not receive the second epistle of Peter, nor the second and third of St. John, nor the epistle of St. Jude, nor the Revelation." Eusebius of Cæsarea, treating of the Scriptural books, "contradicted in his times," enumerated the "epistle to the *Hebrews*, the epistle of *James*, the second of *Peter*, the second and third of *John*, the Epistle of *Jude*, and the *Revelation*." "*These*," he adds, "*should be reckoned doubtful, and contradicted*."

The Revelation of John was omitted from the canonical catalogue of Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, A.D. 340; from that of the Bishops assembled in the Council of Laodicea, A.D. 364; also from the one written by Gregory Nazianzen, Bishop of Constantinople, A.D. 365; and from that of the erudite Philastrius as late as the year 380.

Professor Norton (Gen. of the Gos., vol. ii., p. 162-163), speaking of the Revelations and several of the epistles of the New Testament, says—"It does not appear that they were generally considered as *genuine* during the *first three centuries*." Biblical books that were at one time decided uncanonical and rejected, were afterwards considered inspired, and received as the "word of God." The Toledo Council, as late as the year

A.D. 633, voted into the canon the books of James, Jude, and the Revelation. Dr. Norton, the Cambridge (Mass.) professor, considered the "first and second chapters of Matthew spurious."

Dr. A. Clarke, though a zealous Trinitarian, admits that the passage, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," is unauthentic. In fact, not he alone, but the best ecclesiastical scholars of the world, admit the verse to be an unwarrantable interpolation.

Bishop Colenso, though bringing his learning and logic to bear in undermining the Pentateuch, and showing the impossibilities and contradictions of the Scriptures, is still a bishop. Other prelates in the bosom of the English Church are doubtless quite as unsound. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, of Feb. 10, 1870, had an article under the caption of "The Bishops and the Bible," relating to a recent spirited discussion among the bishops in the Upper House of Convocation, upon the propriety of "revising the authorised version of the Holy Scriptures." During the debate the Bishop of Winchester declared, with tears in his tones, "that it was the bounden duty of the Church to put forth what it conceived to be the *real* word of God." For—

"Everybody who had studied the matter knew that there were in their present volume parts which did really *not* belong to the inspired record. The conviction which prevailed among the people in reference to this subject was likely to be of the most damaging character, unless some remedy as he now proposed (a thorough revision) was adopted."

The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, speaking of the disputed passage in the 5th chapter of the 1st Epistle of John, said:—

"There could be no doubt that this passage should come under revision. There could be no doubt that the New Testament as at present used was a noble work, and he had had many scruples about touching it. He had found, however, that in the Alexandrian manuscripts the early part of St. Matthew's gospel was wanting, while in the Vatican manuscripts the Apocalypse, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and some of the pastoral epistles were wanting." *

* A celebrated writer in that sterling London weekly, *Public Opinion*, of March 12th, 1870, says:—"I cannot see the great danger, in the revision of the Bible, that some do; if we believe the Book to be a divine book, then it is our duty to

“The Bishop of St. David’s was not without fear that this resolution, if carried, would involve the necessity of constant revision of the Scriptures, and for this he was by no means prepared.”

“The Bishop of Llandaff thought that both (the Old and New Testaments) ought to be inquired into. No doubt the Old Testament would prove more difficult of revision than the New, but he did not think the task would prove insuperable, or that there were any reasons why the work should not at once be entered upon. When he went up to Cambridge, in 1817, Hebrew was very little taught. The professor of that time was a chaplain on board ship, who never came up to the University; indeed he was a man of such a bad character that the Master and Fellows of Trinity College allowed him ten shillings a week to stay away, and threatened him that if he ever came to the University they would take means to get him expelled.”

Tischendorf, in his introduction to the New Testament, says:—“I have no doubt that very shortly after the books of the New Testament were written, and before they were protected by the authority of the Church, *many arbitrary alterations and additions* were made in them.”

The three great manuscripts, the Sinaitic Codex, the Vatican, and the Alexandrian, differ more or less from each other. The oldest of these is the Sinaitic, and dates probably to the middle of the fourth century. It is supposed, upon good authority, to be one of the fifty copies which the Emperor Constantine, in

get the truest version possible; for it must be remembered that our version is not of divine inspiration, but only a version of an inspired book; and if people are afraid of the truth, then they prefer man to God. I am sure it ought to be hailed with delight by all who love the Book more than the version. I will give you a few instances of the necessity of a new version from the Tauchnitz edition, by Constantine Tischendorf:—John viii. 1-9 are not to be found in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS.; Mark xvi. 9-20 are not to be found in either Codex; Acts viii. 37 is not in the Vatican, Sinaitic, or Alexandrine MSS.”

The same weekly journal contains the following:—“If any argument were required in favour of a revision of the Scriptures, I think there is one that stands before all others—viz., that the present version, besides being in numerous cases verbally incorrect, contains whole chapters which are not to be found in the two oldest existing manuscripts, many verses, sentences, and single words which are, in the opinion of Biblical scholars, forgeries. . . . I should say a good and honest revision of the Bible during the reign of our present Queen will be looked to by future ages as the brightest episode in her reign, as our present version is an honour to that of James I.”

the year 331, directed to be made for Byzantium, under the care of Eusebius. This manuscript copy contained the entire epistle of Barnabas, and a portion of the "Shepherd of Hermas," two books which, from the first to the middle of the fourth century, were looked upon by a majority of Christians as inspired Scripture. To this end they were read in the churches publicly, the same as the epistles and the synoptic gospels. The "Shepherd of Hermas" abounds in visions and spiritual phenomena. But all of these manuscripts were for hundreds of years in the hands of monks and wily bishops. Bigotry was quite as rampant, and human nature more weak if possible, then than now. Accordingly, those church fathers, many of whom were pitifully ignorant, in connection with bishops, full of partizan zeal, made such additions or abridgments as suited their whims or capricious self-interests.

Though previously referring several times to the characters of these Catholic bishops* who had in charge the keeping and transcribing of the early biblical manuscripts, permit us to introduce the testimony of the Rev. Dr. Ballou, long distinguished in America as an ecclesiastical writer. Speaking of the vagaries of the Church during the first three centuries, he says :—

"From the heretics of all kinds we return to a view of the doctrine and character of the orthodox. The *credulity* of this age was rank, and the learning of the day, at least that of the *fathers*, was too superficial to prove either a preventive or remedy. Apostolic *tradition* also began to be urged as *proof*, when it was so far lost or corrupted that even they who had been *disciples* of the APOSTLES, adduced contrary traditions on one and the same point, and yet upon this very precarious authority some whimsical notions pre-

* Dr. Mosheim admits that early in the fourth century it was an almost universally adopted maxim, "that it was an act of virtue to deceive and lie, when by such means the interests of the Church might be promoted." (Eccl. Hist., vol. i., p. 381, 382.) He further says "that *pious frauds* were approved of by the Christians as early as the time of Hermas." And the learned Blount is candid enough to admit that these Christian fathers justified their deceptions and falsehood by these and other quotations from the Scriptures :—"O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived." (Jer. xx. 7.) "I the Lord have deceived that prophet." (Ez. xiv. 9.) "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned," &c. (Rom. iii. 7.)

veiled. To these shades in the picture we must add a still darker: the Christians, *orthodox* as well as heretics, appear to have employed, in some cases, *known falsehood* in support of their cause. They (the orthodox) had already begun to *forge books* in support of their religion, a practice which it is thought they learned from the heretics; and they now proceeded to propagate accounts of *frequent miracles*, concerning which all the earlier writers, after the Apostles, had been entirely silent." (Anc. Hist. Univer., ch. ii. sec. 1.)

Considered in the light of the foregoing biblical quotations, historic allusions, and incontrovertible testimonies from unwilling orthodox witnesses, how absolutely pitiable, then, this Tertullian paragraph, mirrored to sight by the willing hand of Mr. Howitt:—

"The Bible, this *holy book*, is a treasury from whence these wise men of the world, who have come since, have taken *all* they have left to posterity."

Do not for a moment misunderstand our position. I believe, *firmly believe*, in the inspirations of the Bible! But this unnatural straining to make it all "holy"—this lumping it off into one marvellous book, and summoning the old church fathers to prove it infallible, and a "plenarily inspired treasury," is, besides being injudicious, solid comfort to the carper and sweetest joy to the atheist. Chestnuts are excellent, but apt to choke if swallowed burrs, "husks and all." Sensible people in tropical countries appropriate the pulp and juice only of the orange.

That the interests of religious truth might be enhanced, I would that "Christian Spiritualists" had the practical good sense of the more scholarly of the Swedenborgians. These vigorously exercise their reasoning faculties to determine what constitutes the "divine word," and then study to understand the *inner sense* of this written word, to the end that it may help to holy living. The letter killeth.

The Bible—a book of which Christ himself never wrote a word, and which had no canonical existence in the Apostolic Church—the Bible, a book, or rather a collection of books,*

* In the last of Max Müller's recent lectures, at the Royal Institution, upon the "Science of Religion," he distinctly declared that there were none of the old

written by different individuals at intervals of some thousands of years—is crowded with Jewish customs, incidents, histories, and dramas—with poetry, prophecy, biography, marvel, mystery, superstition, parable, precept, and heavenly inspirations. All its *truths* are inspired. These will live and fruit for ever. Truth is the only and final authority, and of truth each must be his own arbiter and judge. Books, sects, creeds, must all abide the test of individual reason—conscience and the soul. The age of popes and priests, ceremonies and shells, is declining. The spiritual is the real; “It is the Spirit that giveth life,” saith the apostle. The spiritual of the Scriptures is divine and beautiful. Just so far as they speak *truth* to my spirit are they authoritative, and no further. Souls preceded and are necessarily above all external book authority. Inspiration is God’s inbreathed life. The inspirations of the Bible are “profitable for doctrine and reproof.” And though aware of the imperfections of the record, I have more *faith* to-day—a more deep-seated, rational faith in the inspirational teachings—in the signs,

religions that did not teach men “*to do good and shun evil.*” Then reading from the Brahminical Rig Veda, he continued—Here, then, were noble thoughts, in a hymn written at least 3000 years ago. Next he read some extracts from the Zend Avesta of the Persians, containing pure and noble ideas, followed by extracts of like character from the teachings of Buddha. There are strange coincidences between the two religions, so that some of the Buddhist parables would seem to have been taken from the New Testament, were it not *certain* that the Buddhist records are much the oldest of the two. For instance, a disciple of Buddha meets a woman who was an outcast, near a well; she told him that she was a transgressor of the customs of society, but he replied, “I did not ask thy caste. Give me to drink.” The lecturer then spoke of several coincidences, after which he told how Confucius taught, “What you do not like one to do to yourself, that thing do not do to others.” He then pointed out that there was good even in the mythologies of the Greeks and the Romans, when they were examined in a charitable spirit, and added, that research would prove that the ancient religions were the only ones which were possible at the time, taking into consideration all the surrounding conditions. . . . We must study all religions as much as possible in that light in which they appeared to their founders. He then explained how the early languages, being poor in words, abounded in metaphor, and one great mistake often made in these days, is to accept literally what was spoken metaphorically; he also explained how it is utterly impossible to know the original meaning of many things in the Old and New Testament, without a previous acquaintance with ancient languages, and comparative philology.”—*W. H. Harrison, Reporter.*

visions, trances, and spiritual wonders narrated in these ancient scriptural books, than when a devoted Sectarist, toiling in the "Master's vineyard" for a church, a creed, or a mere segment of divine truth.

It may be in harmony with the "Christian" Spiritualism of England made practical, to speak and write of A. J. Davis's revelations,* clairvoyant discoveries, and spiritual communications, as "demon announcements devoid of any evidence whatever." It may further be within the bounds of propriety to sarcastically ask—"Is it likely that we shall turn from following such guides (the Christian fathers) to listen to any living spirits who, from a pagan Hades, solicit us to re-adopt their obsolete creed, as is the manner of Andrew Jackson Davis and his school?" Such language may be considered temperate, and in strict keeping with an assumed refinement and superior spiritual attainment; if so, I do not rightly understand the genius of Spiritualism, or the reciprocal courtesies expected in the ranks of peers.

Discussing and dwelling upon the demerits of "Anti-Christian Spiritualism," the writer continues in this style:—

"Christianity is the religion of all the greatest men and women of ancient and of modern times; of the Apostles, the Fathers, the Martyrs; of Pascal, Fenelon, Newton, Bacon, Milton, Fox, Wesley,

* Not two months since, attending a social gathering of Spiritualists, where caste and position were fully represented, we heard this unjust, this very unjust, remark—"Who can have patience to wade through Andrew Jackson Davis's wilderness of words to get at a few *old* thoughts re-cast from the heathen mythologies and Neo-Platonists?" The February number of the *London Spiritual Magazine* publishes the following, from *Daybreak*, relating to this American seer, thinker, and author:—"A seer, Mr. A. J. Davis, has fixed the locality of the spirit-world (or a portion of it) in the Milky Way, and the great spiritual opening of this seer is supposed to render the statement trustworthy. . . . The assertion that the spirit-sphere is in the Milky Way, must mean, if it has any meaning at all, that the spiritual worlds pervade all creation, and are extended through all universes. This form was perhaps the only one in which a truth broadly expressed could be given to an *uncultivated brain*. Such truths are valuable when we know how to read them, but when taken as actual descriptions of fact, they mislead those who receive them, and excite the ridicule of those who perceive their literal absurdity, and who do not trouble themselves to find out whether they mean anything at all."

or of whatever name illustrious and of substantial erudition, stands forth on the lists of human progress."

Alexander Humboldt, Wilhelm Humboldt, and other celebrated *savans* and scholars of that period and since, made no pretensions to Christianity. Kepler, Halley, Newton, Locke, Leibnitz, Hume, Macaulay, Buckle, Lecky, and other philosophers, moralists, and historians, making for themselves names immortal, are not claimed as creedal Christians; while the ablest scientists and most profound writers of to-day—such as the Carpenters, Darwins, Huxleys, Lyells, Mills, Owens, Spencers, Tyndalls, Wallaces, Varleys, Lockyers, etc., etc.,—are in no way connected with the popular churches of Christendom. In the above Christian catalogue the Church "Fathers" are mentioned. They have already received justice at our hands. The witnesses cited and appearing against them were mediæval Christian authors, and more recent church dignitaries. Excellent man as John Milton may have been, he was a stout apologist for polygamy. (Treat. on Chris. Doc., p. 237 et seq.) From some cause, possibly jealousy, Whitfield nor his friends could never see the saintship of Wesley.

The "martyrs," Pascal, Fenelon, Newton, Fox, etc., may have exhibited a superhuman goodness; if so, it was not because of, but rather in *spite* of, any relations they may unfortunately have held with Christianity—a *Christianity* whose central doctrines are, the "fall of man," "total depravity," "trinity," "vicarious atonement," and "eternal hell torments." Human nature, fresh from the formative hand of God, is inherently and naturally good. In each conscious human soul is embodied a portion of the Infinite Spirit. The tendency of all finite spirits, therefore, is heavenward. God is the infinite magnet—the infinite force, life, love! Ministering angels, in consonance with this law of love, are beckoning all men upward. Retrogression in the absolute is impossible. Eternal progression only is in accordance with Deific law, indexing the ascending tendency of all things.

But when the earthly children of our common humanity are conceived in inharmony, choked by social surroundings, and

early indoctrinated into that traditional Christianity, which, in connection with the "fall of man" and "total innate depravity," teaches there's real "pleasure in sin;" and then, that all the just consequences of sin and wickedness may be escaped by a belief *in*, and an application *of*, the "vicarious sacrifice" of the Son of God, what must we expect? Are such doctrines calculated to reform the world?

These Christian lines naturally belong to this creedal dogma:—

"While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return."

Does not any phase of Christianity connected with a vicarious atonement pay a premium upon sin? by assuring the "vilest sinner," even pirates and murderers, that through repentance, the preciousness of the atoning blood, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they may swing from the gallows direct to glory, there to sing "redeeming grace" for ever? The legitimate tendency of this Christian doctrine is monstrously immoral.

The "martyrs," it may be—certainly "Pascal, Fenelon, Oberlin, Newton, Bacon," and hosts of others—were truly illustrious men, crowned with, because they had earned, a "substantial erudition." They were this, and perhaps more, notwithstanding the poisonous atmosphere and demoralising influences of a cramping, sectarising Christianity. Under the good providence of that God whom St. John denominated "Love," I owe much to Jesus and John, the force of their ethics and the moral purity of their lives—much to Socrates and Plato, and the broad sweep of their divine philosophies—much to Swedenborg, Parker, Emerson, Carlyle, Brittan, Davis, Tuttle,* Barrett, and William Howitt—much to civilisation, science, and the general progressive spirit of the age; but *nothing* to this popular Judaised Christianity, alloyed with Phallic worship.

"You are born Christians," says the self-sacrificing Lamennais,

* Hudson Tuttle is one of our soundest American thinkers. The literature of Spiritualism owes much to his logical brain and facile pen. His "Arcana of Nature," "Arcana of Spiritualism," "Physical Man," "God-idea in History," "Christ-idea in History," and others of his volumes, are having a more extensive sale at present in America, England, and Australia than at any previous time since their publication.

"thank God for it! . . . Compare the Christian nations with all other nations, and what humanity owes to it—the progressive abolition of slavery and serfdom."*

"Born Christians!" So exclaim the devoted Brahmins—"We were born Brahmins, and are true to 'caste'—thank Brahm for it!" So say the Jews—"We were born Hebrews, and have Abraham for our father; thank Jehovah for it!" So boast Mahomedans, and all other blinded sectarists. Christians, as a body corporate, constitute one of the sects among the great religions of the world. Though older, yet considerably less numerous, Christians are far more intolerant and dogmatic than Mahomedans. Christian theology is to the absolute religion what common law is to justice—a system which darkens by its illustrations, and fails of achieving its object in its over-anxiety to proselytise. If truth is the sun of religion, Christian sectarism is the will-o'-the-wisp that "leads to bewilder, and dazzles to blind." Christianity was the bulwark of American slavery.†

* William Howitt, London *Spiritual Magazine*, Jan. 1870, from the French, "Le Livre du Peuple," p. 111.

† The greatest obstacle that abolitionists and reformers found in America, in creating a public sentiment against the abominations of American slavery, was the Christian Church. The clergy South, with great unanimity, and very many of the North also, declared in their pulpits that the Old Testament taught and sanctioned slavery, and that the New Testament nowhere condemned it. Coloured people, who had been "born again," and had professedly become "Christians," were, for this reason, specially recommended while standing upon the auction-block, awaiting the cry of the highest bidder. This making merchandise of Christian men with "tinted skins," inspired the following stinging lines from the Quaker poet, Whittier, while the blight of slavery was yet upon American soil:—

"A Christian! going, gone.

Who bids for God's own image?—for his grace,
Which that poor victim of the market-place
Hath in her suffering won?

"A Christian up for sale!

Wet with blood your whips—o'ertask her frame,
Make her life loathsome with your wrong and shame,
Her patience shall not fail!

"Oh, shame! the Moslem thrall,

Who with his master to the Prophet kneels,
While turning to the sacred Kebla, feels
His fetters break and fall.

"Cheers for the turbaned Bey

Of robber-peopled Tunis! He hath torn
The dark slave dungeons open, and hath borne
Their inmates into day."

Under the robe of sanctity it has murdered millions. Its practical decalogue is written in blood. Inspired by creedal interpretations, it excites the worst passions of human nature. Nothing so infuriates the heart to deeds of rapine and death. Nothing is so incessant in its persecutions, so persevering in its determination, so appalling in its vengeance, or so dangerous in its consequences to liberty and progress.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

Sir Rutherford Alcock, in bidding adieu to Prince Kung, was addressed by that public officer in these searching words: "Now you are going home, I wish you would take away with you your opium and your Christian missionaries."—*China Mail*.

"Priests wet the war-banner with their sacred wine,
Then crossed its blazon folds with the Holy Sign."—WHITTIER.

"Lo! I see long blissful ages,
When this Churchal reign is done,
Stretching like a golden evening,
Forward to the setting sun."—SEER.

SUETONIUS, the Roman writer and friend of Pliny the younger, flourishing in the beginning of Hadrian's reign, denominated the Christian religion "*the new superstition*." Julian called its believers "the Galileans." Accordingly, in the dialogue with old Maris, a blind Christian bishop, mentioned by Sozomen,* he told him by way of scoffing, "Thy Galilean god will not cure thee." St. Jerome writes that the adherents of Jesus were early anathematized under the "name of *Nazarenes* in Syria," while the "Greeks looked upon them as impious Jewish and Grecian impostors." It is certain that Jesus made but little impression upon the brow of that flint-faced age. He was considered by respectable Jews and classic Greeks as little more than a strolling, long-haired wonder-worker and wandering magician.† He was charged with blasphemy, and accused of seduction. He was certainly a Sabbath-breaker. His "reputation" every way

* *Sozom.*, lib. v. c. 4.

† The severe but clear-headed Celsus insisted that Jesus studied magic in Egypt; and St. Austin says it was generally believed among the Greeks and heathen that Jesus wrote books concerning magic, delivering them to Peter and the apostles for the use of the disciples.—*Origen. Cont. Cels.*, lib. ii. ; *Aug. d Cons. Evan.*, lib. i. c. 9.

was exceedingly questionable. He did not marry. Sacrificing all for truth, and going about doing good, he was a mystery to all save the prophet and the mystic. His precepts were holy and his life unique, loving, and divine. He died a martyr, with a pleading prayer of forgiveness trembling upon his lips—lips bathed in gall and wormwood by a proud Jewish conservatism.

His followers were principally fishermen, herdsman, mechanics—the “common people.” The apostles were all mediums, and at times quite human in deportment. It was because of the spiritual gifts attending mediumship that they were chosen to the apostleship. Their idiosyncrasies are still a study. John was to be loved, James admired, Philip esteemed, Andrew watched, Peter doubted, and Judas reformed.

The sons of Zebedee, John and James, were true and substantial witnesses. Others, sensitive and impulsive, were exceedingly erratic, alternately believing and doubting, till finally, in the hour of trial, one of them, at least, denied with an oath having any knowledge of the man. Judas fell. Peter and Paul at a little later period contended face to face. Subsequently the disciples seriously disagreed among themselves concerning the propriety of circumcising. Possessed of more zeal than knowledge or temperance, those early believers upon one occasion, if not more, turned the “Lord’s Supper” into a drunken bacchanal feast (1 Cor. xi. 21, 22). In addition to being quite as inharmonious as many modern spiritual mediums, those primitive believers in Jesus Christ, especially in Grecian cities, were grossly immoral (see 1 Cor. v. 1).

Names should indicate ideas. This is too often unheeded. The genuine admirers of the humble Galilean Jesus were first called “Christians” at Antioch by way of derision. This was some sixty or seventy years after his personal advent. The formal gatherings and joyous assemblings of those converts for social converse—for the exercise of their spiritual gifts and the singing of psalms—were called Churches. The earliest formed were those in Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Smyrna, Athens, Corinth, Rome, and Alexandria. The civic elements constituting these assemblies were so politically and socially dissimilar, that

they did not readily coalesce. Accordingly, dissensions arose. These were followed by heart-burnings, ambitions, divisions, and a reckless "falling away," proving in some instances fearfully disastrous to the "faith once delivered to the saints." Paul reproved certain of these frail, fickle-minded Christians in this language: "Ye did run well for a season;" and John, in an apocalyptic vision relating to the seven Asian Churches, saw the "golden candlestick" removed from their midst.

The Christian superstructure of the Church Fathers in the second century exerted no perceptible national influence till about the time of Constantine the Great. During his imperial reign Christianity was not only recognised and nationalised, but it became a Court religion and a distinguished centre of political power. Now we have reached solid footing from which to look out and take an impartial survey of Christianity,—the Christianity of the mediæval ages, the Christianity of Roman Catholicism, the Christianity of Protestantism, the Christianity of the world! Not forgetting, as we proceed, that Paul* had twisted and purposely coloured the primal teachings of Jesus, that bishops and monks had subsequently manipulated the reflected truths recorded in the Scriptural manuscripts and epistles, the reader will consider that out of this warp and woof—this tradition-woven web, a Constantinian Council of wrangling Catholic bishops, constructed and fashioned a powerful and authoritative institution called *Christianity*.

And now, what of it? What its influence? What of Constantine himself? By the fruit is the tree judged and known. This Christian emperor, rightly denominated a second Nero, was self-willed, wicked, and mercilessly murderous in disposition. He drowned his wife in boiling water; heartlessly put to death his own son Crispus; murdered the two husbands of his sisters, Constantia and Anastasia; took the life of his own brother-in-law, Maximilian Hercules; murdered his nephew, a lad twelve years of age, Sopater, a Pagan priest, and others. Such was the first Chris-

* "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my life unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" (Rom. iii. 7.)

tian emperor who presided over the famous Nicene Council, A.D. 324, at which time Christ's divinity was for the first time pronounced an authoritative finality. Arius, a bishop of extensive learning and patron of the Alexandrine school of divinity, refused to bow down to the edicts of this Constantinian Council, or acknowledge belief in the special divinity of Christ. For this he was anathematised and banished by the emperor to Illyricum, while death* was denounced against those who would not deliver up all Arian writings in their possession.

Immediately after this formal establishment of Christianity with the Athanasian creed, and the investiture of the priesthood with discretionary powers over the consciences of men, persecutions commenced, and blood began to flow in crimson torrents. The execution of heretics by ecclesiastics was the national sequence of theological Christianity. Why should not priests and bishops hate those whom God hated? Why not exercise anger towards those with whom the Hebrew Scriptures declare the "Lord is angry every day?" Why not condemn and burn those in this world upon whom God designs to inflict eternal burnings in the future world? At worst it could be only anticipating the divine purpose and deed. And then Paul enjoined upon men to "be followers,"—that is, imitators of God as "dear children." When numbers of heretical Priscillianists were put to death in A.D. 385, at the instigation of the two dictatorial bishops, Ursatius and Ithacus, they pled for clemency. The unfeeling reply was, "God, the sacred Scriptures, and the interests of the Church, require it!"

Since those dogmatic notions of ambitious prelates crystallised into institutions in Constantinople and Rome, the persecuting tendencies of Christians in some form have not only been indissolubly connected with, but they have constituted the very *genius* of Christianity as manifested in the ranks of Catholics and Protestants.

Historians not influenced by the Church, give us many graphic descriptions of Christian zeal in destroying those magnificent Pagan temples of the East. Frequently hot-

* *Pen. Cyc.*, p. 3340.

headed bishops led destructive enterprises from which the civil powers recoiled in shame. Peasants, sincere in the worship of their fathers, as well as erudite Pagans, defended the altars of their gods with great courage. The battle for supremacy was fierce; but ultimately the Christian war spirit succeeded in completely suppressing Paganism throughout the Roman empire. Then religious persecutors turned their attention more directly to heretics and schismatics. These were hunted like criminals. Multitudes perished by violence. Often accused of magic, or of "dealings with spirits," some were burned, while others were branded with hot irons and publicly whipped to wring from them verbal recantations.

The butcheries of these Christian zealots strike us with absolute horror. They justified their murderous proceedings by quoting the commands of Scripture, and a desire to promote the welfare of the Christian religion. Calvin, Beza, Knox, and others, in later times, wrote books upon the right and *lawfulness* of persecution. John Knox, appealing to the Word of God in the Old Testament, "declared that those who were guilty of idolatry might justly be put to death."* And when Calvin burned Servetus for his anti-Trinitarian doctrines, he was almost universally honoured for the deed by all classes of Protestants.† Melancthon, Bullinger, and Farel wrote to express their warm approbation of the crime, while Beza defended it in an elaborate treatise.‡ No historian with a reputation at stake will dispute the position that persecutions, murders, and "holy wars," have ever gone hand in hand with Christianity. The massacres and wasting devastations of those nine crusades of Christians against sincere Mahomedans, at intervals, for two hundred years, sacrificing over 2,000,000 of human lives, and *all* to get possession of Jerusalem, and rescue a cold, lifeless tomb from the power of the Turks, stand out in blackness unparalleled. When the Christian warrior, Godfrey de Bouillon, took Jerusalem at the close of the tenth century, the whole garrison without distinction

* M'Crie's *Life of Knox*, p. 241.

† Hallam's *Inst. of Lit.*, p. 3.

‡ Lecky's *Europe*, p. 50.

of age or sex, was put to the sword. Infants were slain with their mothers; the streets of Jerusalem were shingled with the bleeding, dying, dead, and yet Jesus was styled "*the Prince of Peace!*" Which exhibited the most of the spirit of the "Prince of Peace," these Christian crusaders, or the Mahomedan Saladin? who, re-taking the city at the second crusade, sacrificed no lives after the moment of surrender, and treated the Christian captives with the greatest kindness. Writing of the crusades, Clark* well observes, "Morals certainly reaped no benefit from them; for of all the armies of any age or nation, none seem ever to have surpassed in profligacy and licentiousness those of the Holy Wars. . . . With them war became a sacred duty; and, instead of prayer and acts of benevolence, the slaughter of human beings was inculcated as an expiation for offences."

During the massacres of St. Bartholomew in France, 10,000 of the common people, and 500 persons of rank, perished in the city of Paris, while thousands upon thousands were inhumanly slaughtered in the provinces. Over this pious result, Pope Gregory XIII. ordered public rejoicings and the performance of high mass. The celebrated Llonente, writing the history of the Inquisition, estimates, from the most reliable authorities, that, prior to the year 1808, the number of victims burned at the stake, by order of the Spanish tribunal, amounted to nearly 40,000. And why not? reason these churchal executioners. If God purposes to burn, rack, and torture these heretics and sinners hereafter, why should not *we*, his vicegerents, commence the work in the present?

The Inquisition was established in 1208 by Pope Innocent III., and in 1209 the massacre of the Albigenses commenced under the prayerful De Montfort. In 1215 the fourth Council of the Lateran (Ecumenical) enjoined "all rulers, as they desired to be esteemed faithful, to swear a public oath that they would labour earnestly, and to the full extent of their power, to *exterminate* from their dominions all those who were branded as heretics by

* *Vestigia Anglicana*, vol. i. p. 339.

the Church.* Upon the ascension of Charles V. to the throne, he put to death, for religious opinions, in his dominions alone, over 50,000. On the 16th of February, 1568, a sentence of the Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics. From this universal doom only a few persons especially named were excepted. "THREE MILLIONS of people, men, women, and children, were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines."† Dating from the insurrection of Wat Tyler, 1381, and its speedy suppression by the barons with the hanging of 1500 insurgents, a portion of them without even the semblance of a trial, to the beheading of Mary Queen of Scots, Feb. 8, 1587, it has been estimated that over two millions of human beings—our common brothers and sisters—were either imprisoned, hung, burned, drowned, beheaded, "boiled to death," or in some way massacred for their religious opinions by the authorities of the very Christian kingdoms of England and Scotland as they were then styled.

"Forth rushed the fiends as with the torrent's sweep,
And deeds were done that made the angels weep."‡

No sooner had King James ascended the throne than there was issued a formal declaration against religious toleration. Not content with this, he put forth laws decidedly unjust against witchcraft and witches; and Parliament was so shamefully subservient to this monarch, that, from his coming into power to the latter portion of the 17th century, "the enormous number of 3,192 individuals were condemned and executed in Great Britain alone under the accusation of witchcraft, sorcery, or conjuration."§

Had the people of this time understood mental science, mesmerism, biology, psychological impression, and the laws of mediumship, those wholesale murders, under the cover of Christianity, would never have stained the pages of English history. But, no! the clergy preached that it was sufficient to "know Christ and him crucified;" and hence this phase of incipient

* *Eymer. Direc. Inquis.*, p. 10. † Motley's *R. D. Republic*, vol. ii. p. 155.

‡ Rogers.

§ Mackinnon's *Inst. of Civ.*, vol. ii. p. 310.

mediumship and clairvoyance, denominated witchcraft, was punished with tortures and death. John Wesley, who had witnessed the "rappings," and other spiritual manifestations in his family, when treating of the folly of considering "apparitions and the accounts of witches as old wives' fables, says the position is not only "in direct opposition to the Bible, but to the suffrage of the wisest and best men in all ages and nations. They (the enlightened) well *know*—whether Christians know it or not—that the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible."* All through the 17th, and till near the middle of the 18th century, witch-hunting and witch-burning were the richly-relished employments of those claiming to be the "godly in Christ Jesus."† It was their daily affirmation—Does not the Bible say, "*Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live*"?

A recent eminent English historian, writing of these times makes this observation—"The theory and practice relating to the Christian theology of this period took on an Old Testament cast. Their modes of thought, their very phraseology, were derived from that source. The contemplation of the massacres of Canaan, and the provisions of the Levitical Code, produced its natural effect upon their minds."

The Christianity of the Mediæval era turned Syria, Asia Minor, and other portions of the Orient into crimson fields of slaughter, sprinkled with fraternal blood the fairest portions of Europe, and blasted and paralysed the intellectual and moral growth of nations. The Protestants of this period, and later, quoting St. Augustine and Tertullian in support of persecution, contended, says a celebrated historian, that, "If the New Testament contained no examples of Jesus and the Apostles employing force, it was simply because in their time no prince had embraced Christianity. But had not Elijah slaughtered with his own hands the prophets of Baal? Did not Hezekiah, and Josiah, and Nebuchadnezzar, after his conversion, destroy by

* Wesley's *Journal*, 1768.

† "Capt. Burt, who visited the country in 1730, speaks of a woman who was burnt as late as 1727."—(See Lecky's *Rationalism in Europe*, p. 147.)

force idolatry within their dominions, and were they not to this day expressly commended for their piety?"

Whenever the Israelites moved towards neighbouring tribes and countries, they "girded on their swords," according to the "word of the Lord." So when Christian nations have extended their boundaries, or founded new colonies, they have marshalled their drilled hosts and gone out in battle array, attended by chaplains to breathe unctuous prayers to the "God of armies," and all—*all* in the name of Christ, the "Prince of Peace!" Consider England's inexcusable conduct towards the unoffending people of India, and America's course with her remaining Indian tribes of the West.* Over the rapacity and murder—over the deeds of these Christian nations, angels might well weep their crystal tears. Mr. Hastings, while still vested with the rule of India, and perfectly acquainted with all the circumstances, wrote in this spirited manner:—"I fear that our encroaching spirit, and the insolence with which it has been exerted, has caused our alliance to be as much dreaded by all the powers of Hindostan as any arms. Our encroaching spirit and the uncontrolled and even *protected licentiousness* of individuals, have done more injury to our national reputation than our arms and the credit of our strength has raised it. Every person in India dreads a

* A recent report forwarded to Washington, U.S.A., from the West, under the caption of "Massacre of the Piegan Indians," reads thus:—"The result of the expedition against the Indians is thus officially stated in a communication to General Sully, dated Helena, Montana, Feb. 6:—"Of the 173 killed, 33 were men; of these 15 only were such as are called by them young or fighting men; these were between the ages of twelve and thirty-seven; the remaining eighteen were between the ages of thirty-seven and seventy, eight of the latter between sixty and seventy. Ninety were women; the remaining fifty were children, none of them aged twelve years, and many of them in their mothers' arms. Out of 219 Indians belonging to Red Horn's camp only forty-six survived. Red Horn himself was killed. At the time of the attack this camp were suffering severely from small-pox, having had it among them for two months, the average rate of deaths among them having been six daily. The remnant of the Piegan Indians, with the exception of one band, upon hearing of the annihilation of Red Horn's band, and fearing they might be called upon to share a similar fate, broke up their camp and fled.'" The indiscriminate shooting down of these Indians—men, women, and children—fairly exhibits the moral status of Christian America, with its 40,000 clergymen and billions of church property.

connection with us." Think of that, Brahmins, natives of heathen India*—shrinking, pleading, *dreading* any "connection," any social or political relations with the Christians of England!

When Columbus discovered one of the groups of the Bahamas, he ordered a *Te Deum* to be sung at sunrise; then, sword in hand,

* India was the cradle of the primal civilisations and religions. These religions have ever travelled westward. Missionaries imbued with their spirit continue to reach us at intervals from the Ganges; the last is in the person of Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen. This Indian Reformer belonged originally to the physicians' caste, and was one of the leaders among the Brahmo Somaj, whose avowed purpose was to bring the Hindoos up again to the divine altitudes of the Vedas, or the pure Theism of the Aryans in the worship of one God, the Infinite Spirit Presence of the Universe. At a recent public welcome given to this Brahminical religionist in London, there was present a large and enthusiastic audience, with the Dean of Westminster, Lord Lawrence, Lord Houghton, Sir James Lawrence, Dr. Marks, and many other distinguished gentlemen upon the platform. Letters of sympathy were read from the Duke of Argyll, Sir John Bowring, Sir C. Trevelyan, Mr. J. S. Mill, Mr. Grant Duff, Max Müller, Rev. H. Allen, Mr. S. Harris Booth, Rev. W. Roberts, Rev. Thomas Binney, the Dean of St. Paul's, and F. Maurice. Keshub Chunder Sen, in the course of his eloquent address, said—"There are thousands and millions, I know, who do not like to see Christ preached to the population of India. Christianity first came to India in a foreign and *repulsive form*. Christianity, in its founders, in its earliest traditions, in its earliest labourers, was Oriental and Asiatic, and there is no reason why it should, in the present day, be presented to the Indian population in any other form. (Cheers.) Leave us to ourselves, and let us study the Bible ourselves. (Cheers.) Do we not find there imageries, precepts, and the manner in which those precepts were told, of an Oriental and Asiatic stamp? Do we not find that in those descriptions with which an Indian is bound to sympathise? Do we not feel that the sweet spirit of Jesus comes as something very natural to the native heart—something with which, by the very constitution of our peculiarly Indian mind, we are bound to sympathise? In that spirit Christ shall be accepted by India. There may be thousands who deny that; but I for one, so long as I live, shall say that the Spirit of Christ India will one day accept. (Cheers.) But I cannot say the same thing with regard to the doctrines and dogmas which you have presented to India through your *various Churches*. There are so many Churches into which Christianity has been divided—there are so many different kinds of doctrine, ceremony, and ritual, prescribed and followed by different religious denominations who call themselves Christian, that India is really confounded and perplexed, when she is asked to solve the great problem, which of these is to be accepted?—which is the true one? (Cheers.) All these Churches which constitute the Church of Christ represent different truths and different doctrines, although they have something in common. But, in India, we are obliged to look to the mass of divergence more than to those matters in regard to

followed by a crucifix, he walked to a slight eminence and took possession of the country in the name of the Crown of Spain. After exploring and traversing these islands for a time, he wrote to Ferdinand and Isabella, describing the Indians and their country thus:—"This country excels all others, as far as the day surpasses the night in splendour: the natives love their neighbour as themselves; their conversation is the sweetest imaginable; their faces always smiling, and so gentle, so affectionate are they, that I swear to your highnesses there is not a better people in the world." But what course did Columbus—did these Christian Spaniards pursue towards these "gentle and affectionate" natives? They at once, after the manner of all Christendom, inaugurated war, and commenced subjugating the islands. The result was havoc, insult, theft, misery, and the wholesale murder of these peaceable Aborigines, who worshipped the "Great Spirit" in the stillness of their forest homes. Herrera and Peter Martyr give thrilling descriptions of the way in which the Indians received the Spaniards:—"When any of the Spaniards came near to a village, the most ancient and venerable of the Indians, or the cazique himself, if present, came out to

which there is unity in Christ's Church. Each sect comes to the population and exhibits its own doctrines and dogmas. For the time being they engage the attention of the Hindoo. Perhaps he is satisfied. But then comes the missionary of another Church and does the same, and the Hindoo's mind becomes unsettled; he thinks over the various doctrines and dogmas; he ultimately becomes quite confounded, and knows not what to do. . . . He said he had come to England not to learn Christian doctrine, but to see Christian life, and he plainly stated that the cause of Christianity had been much hindered in India by the insincere life of its English professors and lecturers. He besought England to send no more of these nominal Christians with their endless doctrines and dogmas, which they did not carry into actual practice. He resumed his seat amidst prolonged cheering." The discourse as a whole was a masterly effort, producing a profound and broadening effect upon the assemblage. India should send more such religious reformers, or missionaries, into Christian England. The masses of American and English Spiritualists believe with Chunder Sen in one "living and true God," and in the "sweet spirit of Jesus," or the Christ-principle of love—love conjoined with Divine wisdom, as the redemptive power of the soul. When this Indian reformer, in obedience to the apostolic injunction, "adds to his faith knowledge"—a tangible knowledge of a future existence, through the present ministry of spirits, then shall we all be of one mind, and of one accord, as they were upon the day of Pentecost.

meet them, and gently conducting them into their habitations, seated them on stools of ebony curiously ornamented. These benches seemed to be seats of honour reserved for their guests, for the Indians threw themselves on the ground, and kissing the hands and feet of the Spaniards, offered them fruits and the choicest of their viands, entreating them to prolong their stay with such solicitude and reverence as demonstrated that they considered them as beings of a superior nature, whose presence consecrated their dwellings, and brought a blessing with it. One old man, a native of Cuba, approaching Columbus with great reverence, and presenting a basket of fruit, thus addressed him:—‘Whether you are divinities or mortal men we know not. You come into these countries with a force, against which, were we inclined to resist it, resistance would be a folly. We are all therefore at your mercy: but if you are men subject to mortality like ourselves, you cannot be unapprised that after this life there is another, wherein a very different portion is allotted to good and bad men. If, therefore, you expect to die, and believe with us that every one is to be rewarded in a future state according to his conduct in the present, you will do no hurt to those who do none to you.’”

How did these Christians from Spain return the kindnesses of those poor Pagan Indians, “deprived of the influences of Christianity?” Let the earnest, eloquent Bryan Edwards answer:—“All the murders and desolations of the most pitiless tyrants that ever diverted themselves with the pangs and convulsions of their fellow-creatures, fall infinitely short of the bloody enormities committed by the Spanish nation in the conquest of the New World—a conquest, on a low estimate, effected by the *murder of ten millions* of the species! . . . Who can help forming an indignant wish that the hand of Heaven, by some miraculous interposition, had swept these European tyrants from the face of the earth, who, like so many beasts of prey, roamed round the world only to desolate and destroy; and more remorseless than the fiercest savage, thirsted for human blood without having the impulse of natural appetite to plead in their defence!”

It is said, upon the best authority, that “when Hatuey was

fastened to the stake, a Franciscan friar, *labouring to convert him*, promised immediate admission into the joys of heaven, if he could embrace the Christian faith. 'Are there any Spaniards,' says he, after some pause, 'in that region of bliss which you describe?' 'Yes,' replied the monk, 'but such only as are worthy and good.' 'The best of them,' returned the indignant cazique, 'have neither worth nor goodness! I will not go to a place where I may meet with that accursed race!'" Carefully tracing the career of the Christian Church under the patronage of Christian sovereigns, one is compelled to consider Christianity synonymous almost with persecution and fiendishness! Does an apologist say this was not Christianity? The groundless assertion is denied. It was—it *is* Christianity.* And what is more, it is in perfect keeping with the genius of the system as interpreted by councils, synods, and the masses of its devotees. If the fruits are disliked, disown—deny the tree—the *name*, even, of the tree that bore and bears them. This theological superstructure—Judaized Christianity—with its total depravity and vicarious atonement—with its angry God and threatened retaliatory damnation of numberless millions—naturally and legitimately promotes just such individual and natural wickedness as we have been contemplating.† Using blood for ink, Christianity

* "The Ages Dark are past; yet in the light
Of this great century, the doom of night
Hangs o'er the head of him who nobly dares
To rise from its traditions—he, too, shares
The Martyr's fate; for hatred still is rife,
The murderous edges of the critic's knife
Quiver within his bosom, malice sends
Her flaming shafts forth, and the good man bends
Calmly and silently their weight beneath,
Till he through very love thus dies the death
Of Martyrdom."

A Lyric of the Martyr Age.

† When persecuting, "Bloody Mary"—a devoted Christian by profession—was reproved for those inhuman butcheries perpetrated for Christ's sake, she replied—"As the souls of heretics are hereafter to be eternally burning in hell, there can be nothing more proper than for me to imitate the Divine vengeance by burning them on earth."

might write the names of every mortal who has lived upon earth in the crimson fluid it has drained from human veins.

Consider for a moment tribes and nations who had never heard of Christianity, or King James's translation of the Scriptures. Dr. Livingstone, in his *Travels in Africa*, describes a people whom he calls Bermegians, and says they "have very correct ideas of the Deity. They believe in one God only, and regard him as a being of infinite wisdom and power. They believe also in the immortality of the human soul, and that it exists immediately after death in the human form. They have no churches or temples; but perform their acts of worship in their own houses, or groves appropriated for that purpose. Their priests are supported by voluntary contribution of the people, and are not allowed to receive any fees or perquisites for the exercise of their sacerdotal duties; because, as they think, the sacred things of religion should not be a marketable commodity. The religion of these people is of so simple a nature, and involves so few dogmas, that there is no occasion for disagreement, or disputations; consequently there are no sects or schisms in their church, but all are of one faith. They never show any ill feeling or impatience when any person expresses religious opinions different from their own. Even the Free-thinkers and Atheists of their own nation meet with kind and gentle treatment, being objects of compassion rather than hatred; the consequence is, that Atheism and other religious errors die out among them for want of opposition."*

He also travelled among the Callaios, a people whom he affirms "hold all warlike achievements in utter contempt and

* The London *Athenæum*, reporting the doings of the British Geographical Society, has the following:—"The first paper was on 'A Visit to Yarkand and Kashgar,' by Mr. R. B. Shaw. Tartary contains cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants, where many of the arts of civilisation are carried on. Security of life and property exists, the roads are full of life and movement, and in the towns are extensive bazaars, containing rows of shops, where goods of every kind and from every country are exhibited. In Yarkand there are sixty colleges, with endowments of land, for the education of students of Mussulman law and divinity, while every street contains a primary school attached to a mosque. The people seem virtuous and happy." Gracious Heaven! grant to keep Christian missionaries away from 'happy' heathen Tartary.

abhorrence; and have such a nice sense of justice and equity, that they never make any encroachment on the territory of their neighbours, nor covet anything that belongs to others. Their dealings among each other is characterised by mutual confidence and good faith; no man is afraid of being cheated or defrauded, and no precautions are ever used to prevent thefts and robberies, for such misdemeanours never occur.”* His account of seventeen years’ travel in Africa contains descriptions of other tribes of like simplicity and spirituality of life and practice. Could they not be induced to send missionaries to the Christian nations of the earth? The Bacabas, he declares, “refuse to fight under any circumstances.” Bayard Taylor, in his “*Tribune Correspondence*” from the East, where he was mingling daily with Mahomedans, Jews, and Christians, gave the followers of Mahomet the preference in regard to the sincerity of their religious convictions. Landing upon one occasion at a Mahomedan port, and expressing some fear relative to the safety of his luggage, was told “there would be no risk whatever in leaving it unguarded in his absence, as there was not a ‘Christian’ within a mile of the place!”

Dr. Evanson, in his “Dissonance on the Gospel,” writes, “I was, many years ago, assured by an intimate friend, and an intelligent and worthy man, who had traded largely both in the northern part of Africa and in many countries of Europe, that he was never once deceived in confiding in the honour and integrity of a Mahomedan; but that, through the perfidy and dishonesty of some of those he dealt with, he had been defrauded and injured in every nation of professed Christians among whom he had traded.”

St. Pierre, in his “*Studies of Nature*,” says that the philosopher Laloubere, envoy from Louis XIV. to Siam, relates in the account of his mission, that the Asiatics laugh us to scorn when we boast to them of the excellence of our Christian religion as contributing to the happiness of States. They ask, on reading our histories, how it is possible that our religion should be so humane, while we wage war ten times more frequently than they do.†

* Tri. of Criti., p. 53.

† Rev. M. B. Craven, Prolego., p. 54.

Bishop Kidder says—"Were a wise man to choose his religion from those who profess it, perhaps Christianity would be the last religion he would choose."*

* Doubtless it would,—so "Christian Spiritualism" would perhaps be the last expression of religious thought that the progressive free-thinking minds of this century would be inclined to accept. Strange as it may seem, the very term "Christian" connected with individuals virtually glooms the life and vitiates the criticisms of those professedly accepting the sublime principles of Spiritualism. This temper was unwisely manifest in the long-delayed criticism of the "Seers of the Ages" appearing in the *Spiritual Magazine*. Satire that cuts keenly is at times admissible; but that which saws and mangles is abominable. Owing to an insufferable, though half-subdued egotism, it appears quite impossible for certain critics to exhibit a noble impartial spirit. Especially is this true if they treat of American works sympathising with A. J. Davis. They seem to hold a sort of mental vitriol bottle in their bosoms, anxious to bespatter their kind, but always, of course, in the "interests of truth."

Criticism is a study by which ordinary men grow important and formidable, says Emerson, at a "small expense." Their judgment generally leaning with their inclination, they seldom pronounce against individual interests. Those are generally the most severe and unjust in their criticisms who lack either the wit or wisdom to write books themselves, or if writing, write unsaleable ones. The above remarks general, and in no way personal we beg now to quote from our anonymous critic in the *Spiritual Magazine*. After writing of "glare and tropical luxuriance," faulting the "rhetorical style" using the vulgar word "hifalutin," which I have no recollection of seeing spot any American book or periodical, and complacently telling the reader, competent in all probability to judge for himself, that he (assuming authority to judge of the "spirit" and author's motives) "cannot altogether commend the spirit in which the work is conceived and executed,"—the critic further says—

"A more capital defect is in the matter of the work. Its author seems at deadly feud with all the creeds and churches of Christendom; and wherever practicable, he takes occasion to disparage Christianity, both directly by depreciation, and indirectly by lauding every other faith and philosophy in comparison with it. His motto seems to be:—'Every mountain of Christian faith shall be laid low, and every valley of Paganism shall be exalted; and its crooked places shall be made straight, and its rough places plain.'"

"*Christian faith!*" here we have it again. No faith is considered "Christian" by any of the evangelical denominations of Christendom that does not embody "the fall of man," "total depravity," "deity of Christ," "vicarious atonement," and "endless torments." Does the writer's phrase, "Christian faith," imply these doctrines? If not, what does he mean by the term common alike to Protestant and Roman Catholic? Shame on all such catch-breeze platitudes! I confess to a sort of serene pity for that stolidity of intellect and stupidity of perception that fails to distinguish between "Christian faith" or the Christianity of the world and the broad primal teachings of Jesus. As the blind are incapable of criticising colours, and the deaf music, so no sullen sepulchral-visaged stoic,

Our individual experience is in perfect accord with that of Dr. Evanson, Bayard Taylor, and other distinguished travellers who have penetrated the Eastern countries. The hospitality and benevolence of the Asiatics are proverbial. It was the spontaneous and universal testimony of those with whom we conversed last season in Constantinople and other portions of Asia—merchants, government officials, consuls, and ministers of State—that devoted Mahomedans, receiving the Koran as the voiced word of Allah through Mahomed, were not only less selfish, but more truthful, honest, and trustworthy than the same number of Christians in the cities and country, not excepting the Gregorian Christians of the more eastern portions of Asia Minor. This moral estimate is not so applicable, however, to the Turks of Constantinople, who, from social and commercial intercourse, have become quite extensively infected with the immoralities of Christian nations, especially the French, as to those in the interior of the country, where they live in strict obedience to the moral teachings of the Koran.

Dr. Boardman, in a paper criticising the dishonourable conduct of the British nation towards the Chinese in matters relating to the opium trade, says—"Here is Christianity on one side, and Paganism on the other. Paganism is trying to shelter its subjects from one of the worst curses which can light upon a nation, and Christianity insists upon blasting and destroying them even though it cost a war to accomplish its purpose."*

Wm. Howitt, in the closing paragraph of his contribution to the *Spiritual Magazine*, gives his final word, in this language:—

wintering in frigid isolation amid the smoke and fogs of London, is mentally incapacitated to criticise an inspirational volume. Though frequently disapproving of the "infidel" Spiritualism of America, many of the best contributions appearing in the *Spiritual Magazine* have been from the pens of A. E. Newton, Epes Sargent, Judge Edmonds, Rev. Mr. Mountford, Professor Gunning, Robert Dale Owen, and others. This monthly is exceedingly interesting and useful as a fact-gatherer. And facts are valuable just so far as they are reduced to order and made to subserve the practical ends of life. The articles from that truly noble man, R. D. Owen, appearing lately in the *Spiritual Magazine*, were copied without acknowledgment from *The Universe*, a weekly periodical published in New York, and devoted to Spiritualism, reform, woman's independence, and general literature.

* Rev. Mr. Craven's Prolegomen.

"We know as assuredly as we can know anything that Christianity has stood unharmed for nearly two thousand years against every imaginable assault of men and demons. Planted on the rock of time-tried history, hailed as the hope and trust of every spiritual need in the human soul, it will continue to flout its divine banner in the face of Comtists, secularists, and the hybrid race of ultra-rationalists, and, at the end of the world, will bear it in unbroken victory into the eternal regions of its King."*

Truly has Christianity "stood" in the world "nearly two thousand years," and what of it? Is the world saved? Is humanity redeemed, beautified, glorified? Have men beaten their swords to ploughshares, and do Christian nations learn war no more? Is the Eden of prophet and poet upon us? Witnessing the lives of Christians, are sceptics compelled to exclaim—"*Behold, how they love one another!*" Christianity was preached, according to Paul (Col. ii. 23), to "every creature under heaven" in his time: where were its peace-giving and heavenly results? Are professing Christians† in this century really any better—any more charitable and Christ-like than those denominated infidels and "ultra-rationalists"? Nearly two thousand years of trial and demonstration have justly written down Christianity a most stupendous failure! The fruits, the influences, justify such judgment. Its highways ablaze with war banners, are paved with human skulls; and its history, shocking to refined natures, can only be written in tears and blood. The candid in every walk of life must admit that, since the famous Constantinian Council, its undertones have been the groans and

* *Spiritual Magazine*, January, 1870.

† Better conscientiously deny the existence of Jesus altogether, as does E. S. Wheeler, with others, and live out the Christ-principle of "good-will to man," than to confess with the lips belief in Jesus Christ and him crucified, yet manifest a narrow, persecuting, self-satisfied zeal becoming the Vandal races. Christians and Christian Spiritualists who show their adhesion to Christianity by misrepresenting their fellow-men; their humility, by lauding themselves; their constructive purpose, by undermining the temples of others; their charity, by vilifying their neighbours; and their tolerance, by hurling anathemas at all who refuse to echo their shibboleth, will find their paths jagged and thorny with God's compensations. "As ye mete it shall be measured to you again," is a self-adjusting law of life.

pleading cries of the persecuted and the imprisoned, the be-headed and the burned at martyr's stakes!

In corroboration of this position, I take a sort of mournful pleasure in citing several eloquent passages from Mr. Howitt's interesting work, entitled "*Colonisation and Christianity*." The marked inharmonies between his past positions, as elucidated in this volume upon Christian colonisation, and his present status, as exemplified in the *Spiritual Magazine*, are for him, not us, to adjust and settle. Writing of Christian Europe, he forcibly asks—

"For what are all our international boundaries; our lines of demarcation; our frontier fortresses and sentinels; our martello towers, and guard ships; our walled and gated cities; our bastions and batteries; and our jealous passports? These are all barefaced and glaring testimonies that our pretence of Christianity is a mere assumption; that after upwards of a thousand years of the boasted possession of Christianity, Europe has not yet learned to govern itself by its plainest precepts; and that her children have no claim to, or reliance in that spirit of 'love which casteth out all fear.' It is very well to vaunt the title of Christian one to another—every nation knows in its own soul, it is a *hollow pretence*. . . . Centuries of the most unremitted hatred,—blood poured over every plain of Europe, and sprinkled on its very mountain tops, cry out too dreadfully, that it is a dismal cheat. Wars, the most savage and unprovoked; oppressions, the most desperate; tyrannies, the most ruthless; massacres, the most horrible; death-fires and tortures the most exquisite, perpetuated one on another for the faith, and in the very name of God; dungeons and inquisitions; the blood of the Vaudois, and the flaming homes of the Covenanters are all in their memories, and give the lie to their professions.

"We call ourselves civilised, yet we are daily perpetrating the grossest outrages; we boast of our knowledge, yet we do not know how to live one with another half so peaceably as wolves; we term ourselves Christians, yet the plainest injunction of Christ, 'to love our neighbour as ourselves,' we have yet, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight years after his death, to adopt!

"We talk of the heathen, the savage, and the cruel, and the wily tribes, that fill the rest of the earth; but how is it that these tribes know *us*? Chiefly by the very features that we attribute exclusively to them. They know us chiefly by our crimes and our cruelty. It is we who are, and must appear to them the savages. . . . We have professed, indeed, to teach Christianity to them; *but we had it not to teach*, and we have carried them instead, all the curses and the horrors of a demon race.

“People have wondered at the slow progress, and in many countries, the almost hopeless labours of the missionaries;—why should they wonder? The missionaries had Christianity to teach—and their countrymen had been there before them, and called themselves Christians! That was enough: what recommendations could a religion have, to men who had seen its professors for generations in the sole characters of thieves, murderers, and oppressors? The missionaries told them that in Christianity lay their salvation;—they shook their heads, they had already found it their destruction! They told them they were come to comfort and enlighten them;—they had already been comforted by the seizure of their lands, the violation of their ancient rights, the kidnapping of their persons; and they had been enlightened by the midnight flames of their own dwellings! Is there any mystery in the difficulties of the missionaries? Is there any in the apathy of simple nations towards Christianity?

“The barbarities and desperate outrages of the so-called Christian race, throughout every region of the world, and upon every people that they have been able to subdue, are not to be paralleled by those of any other race, however fierce, however untaught, and however reckless of mercy and of shame, in any age of the earth.”*

Thanks for such brave utterances. They have the ring of the genuine metal. Justice and benevolence inspired them. But do I hear it said the above-quoted passages refer only to the abuses of Christianity, and further, that these men were no Christians? Who is the proper judge, pray? Who the Pope so infallible and self-sufficient as to presume upon such an unwarrantable decision without a syllable of qualification? They vehemently insisted that they *were* Christians, accepting by faith the cardinal doctrines of Christianity—trinity, atonement, and eternal torments; and further, they announced to the world that, in their fiendish practices of oppression, massacre, and death-torturing machinery, they were doing “God’s service.” This service they justified by quotations from the Scriptures and authoritative citations, as precedents, from the ancient Church fathers.

Since, therefore, the Christianity of the past† and present is

* W. Howitt’s “Colonisation and Christianity.”

† The majority of the Church fathers and Christians, with hardly a dissenting voice, through the Middle Ages, taught the “barbarians,” and all whom they could influence, to despise learning and science. The Christian Church, excom-

indissolubly connected either with jarring sectarisms, aggressive warfare, or the most wanton wickedness, why seek to regalanise and gloss it over? Why strive in any way to conserve this word "Christian," coined many years after the Nazarene's time, and first used in derision? *Why*, when so diametrically opposed by historic association to the life, love-nature, and beautiful teachings of Jesus, and so very offensive to the seers and great reform leaders of to-day? * Every Churchal thread impaired, *why*

municating Copernicus, hastened his death, and then waited 278 years before revoking the curse of excommunication. The same Churchal institution forced the denial from Galileo that the earth moved, and, at death, denied him a Christian burial. Protestant Christians, with few exceptions, vilified Gall, Spurzheim, Combe, and the early elucidators of phrenology, declaring it led to infidelity. The voice of the Christian Church to-day is violent against Darwin, Huxley, Carpenter, and the ablest scientists that grace the age. Book-burning was a Christian amusement of the Middle Ages. Those hot-headed zealots endeavoured to destroy every record of "heathen" scholarship, and blot from existence all the classical works of the ancients. "The monks defaced the old manuscripts in order to copy on them the psalms of a breviary or the prayers of a missal. At Rome a part of a book of Livy was found between the lines of a parchment, but half-effaced, on which they had substituted a book of the Bible. In the Vatican Library the great work of Cicero, 'De Republicâ,' was found written over with a worthless treatise upon the Psalms; fortunately the original writing was traced and the work thus preserved. The elder Disraeli recalls attention to the fact, that 'the pathetic narrative of Nicolas Chromates of the ravages committed by the Christians of the thirteenth century in Constantinople, was fraudulently suppressed in the printed editions. It has been preserved by Dr. Clarke, who observes that 'the Turks have committed fewer injuries to the works of art than the barbarous Christians of that age.' In sober truth, the 'conquering barbarians' were taught that to destroy works of art and literature was one of the Christian virtues.' And even as late as the sixteenth century twelve thousand copies of the Talmud were cast into the flames at Cremona, and for attempting to stay this plague of burning, the celebrated Reuchlin, incurred the hate of several important persons. 'Inflamed with the blindest zeal against everything Pagan, Pope Gregory VII. ordered that the library of the Palestine Apollo (a treasury of literature formed by successive emperors) should be committed to the flames. He issued this 'order,' says a learned antiquary, 'under the notion of confining the attention of the clergy to the Holy Scriptures. From that time all ancient learning which was not sanctioned by the authority of the Church has been emphatically distinguished as *profane*, in contradistinction to *sacred*.'"—*Church in Olden Times*. Dr. P. W. Perfit.

* The translator of Garibaldi's "Rule of the Monk" says—"Giuseppe Garibaldi, in 1849, then recently arrived in Rome, visited in person every convent, and was present during the whole of the investigations. In all . . . were vaults plainly

attempt the fruitless task of patching "Christian" upon this newly-woven and truly golden garment—the Spiritual Philosophy? It is not forgotten that helps are sometimes necessary to weak organisations. The term "Christian," serving in narrow non-enlightened circles as a convenient handle, may occasionally open the gate-way to a questionable May-day respectability. The "little ones" as the Nazarene taught should not be offended. Such as feel the need of the appellation *Christian* as a temporary help into what they may consider "good society," are entitled to the advantages. But Jesus, wrote an apostle, "made himself of no reputation." Rising above custom, reckless of conventionalities, and thoroughly individualised, he stood up in the consciousness of a regal self-hood and said, "*I testify of myself.*" Titles and props, handles and crutches, then, for creedal cripples; but athletic limbs and sound well-balanced brains for true men and women, and the will-force to use them.

Making no mention of the British army and navy expenses, of costly Church and State establishments, of gentlemen's parks and oppressive game-laws, England has a million of paupers.

dedicated to the reception of the bones of infants. Statistics prove that in no city is there so great a number of children born out of wedlock as in Rome; and it is in Rome, also, that the greatest number of infanticides take place. This must ever be the case with a wealthy unmarried priesthood and a poor and ignorant population."

Of the general tone of Garibaldi's evidence against the Catholic and Protestant clergy, this passage is a fair specimen:—"What matters a crime to a priest if he can cover it? He had committed a gross lie by calling himself the minister of God; and now he took advantage of the easy ignorance of his neighbours to conceal a still grosser crime. Those of his profession use double-dealing all their lives. A priest knows himself to be an impostor, unless he be a fool, or have been taught to lie from his boyhood; so that, as he advances in years, he becomes not even able any longer to dissociate the false and the true. Whilst he lives in comfort, he makes the credulous multitude believe he suffers hardships and privations. Poor priest! Well do we remember seeing in America a painting representing one of the cloth seated at a dining-table spread with all kinds of viands and a flagon of wine, in the act of caressing his plump and rosy Perpetua, who was seated at his side; and, meanwhile, outside the door stood a poor Irishman with his wife and baby. . . . Infamous mockery! On the one hand, there was plenty, enjoyment, hypocrisy, and lying; on the other, poverty, ignorance, credulity, and innocent misery."

Christian London alone has "one hundred and sixty thousand paupers." Another "death from starvation"* is a daily winter newspaper caption. These poor, shivering and homeless, are, from the civic necessities forced upon them, religiously churchless; while the pampered nobility sit upon silkened cushions in magnificent edifices, read services from golden-clasped prayer-books, and bow gracefully when mournfully intoning the sentence—"Lord Jesus Christ." Bishops, clothed in "purple and fine linen"—bishops and priests relishing the good things of this world, faring sumptuously every day, and revelling in ecclesiastical riches, preach to these wealthy and titled from texts like this—"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."

"Woe unto you rich men!—woe unto you scribes, pharisees, hypocrites!" exclaimed the lowly Judean teacher, "How can ye escape the damnation of Gehenna!"—that is, the condemnation of your vested and veiled wickedness. Down, then, upon all this Churchal hypocrisy! This verbal formal Christianity! No more Christian crusades, Christian colonising, nor Christian wars for gain or glory. No more Christian slave-holding, Christian witch-burning, Christian Indian murdering, Christian persecuting, Christian anathematising, nor "*Christian*" Spiritualism.†

* "Without mentioning the murders in unhappy Ireland, it must be evident to even the casual reader of the public journals, that crime, poverty, starvation, and clerical delinquencies are on the increase in many portions of the kingdom."—*Southern Leader*.

From a letter written by the Rev. E. R. Conder, addressed to the editor of the *English Independent*, and published in a late number of the *Leeds Mercury*, I find the following candid admission:—"It is a confession that large numbers of our population are in that state of semi-barbarism in which they cannot be trusted with the first and most sacred of human duties—the care of their own children. Either they are too poor, or too unprincipled, or too ignorant and incompetent. . . . Sorrowfully and with shame, as an Englishman and a Christian, I admit it."

† If future contributors to the *Spiritual Magazine* see proper to be-little and denounce "anti-Christian Spiritualists," will they carefully and critically define their terms. Assumption, glib verbiage, and all unhistoric off-hand assertions are cheap. Definitions with reasons—sound logical reasons—are demanded.

Christian is an adjective of ill omen. Words should symbolise ideas. The term Spiritualism requires neither prefix nor affix. Demonstrating a future existence, spanning the dual-realm of matter and spirit, educating and spiritualising the races of the present; it looks, upon scientific principles, after the highest interests of all such rational intelligences as must, in the order of nature, necessarily people the far-reaching future. Spiritualism comprehends the whole. Its unchangeable laws and eternal principles are the "Sacred Word,"—God is Spirit, and Spirit is causation, life, love.

Warned, therefore, by the blood-crimsoned banners that have floated and still float over Christian lands;—in the name of the imprisoned and the beggared, the burned and the persecuted for "Christ's sake;" in the name of the skinless skeletons of 50,000,000 of slaughtered victims, slaughtered and piled upon the bony back of a churchal Christianity, I protest as one, among sympathising millions, against having "Christian" dragged in and imposed upon Spiritualism! Sectarian Christianity is becoming more and more a moral stench in the nostrils of all great, noble souls. Scientists in every enlightened country spit upon its creed-stuffed and priest-patched carcass. Profound thinkers make merry over its shattered, withered, and soulless body!

True, it had its uses. Scaffoldings in the old Gothic ages had

I.—What idea do you intend to convey by the term "Christian"?

II.—What relation has "Christian," or the Christianity of this century, to the purity, charity, and self-sacrifice ascribed to the tender and forgiving Jesus of the Gospels?"

III.—In addition to the precepts enunciated, and the good works recommended alike by the advanced minds of Pagan and anti-Pagan, Asiatic and European lands, what theological doctrines must one receive to be an acceptable "Christian spiritualist?"

IV.—Is it really requisite to believe in the plenary inspiration of the Bible, in the absolute Deity of Jesus Christ, in a vicarious atonement for sin, and the eternal damnation of myriads, to entitle truth-seeking mortals to the sheltering wing of a dogmatising "Christian Spiritualism"? If not, why draw comparisons between Christian and "anti-Christian," and make invidious distinctions in the fraternity of spiritualists, where individual conscience is umpire and honest opinion should ever be entitled to respect?

theirs. Change is the order of nature. Life and death are musical ripples upon the measureless ocean of existence. When an ecclesiastical organism is literally dead, however, wisdom dictates its speedy burial. Only the good, the true, the spiritual, are immortal.

“Ring out the old, ring in the new;
Ring in the Christ that is to be.”

CHAPTER V.

JESUS AND THE POSITIVE RELIGION.

"I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long, complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterise their articles of belief and confessions of faith. When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, Jesus' condensed statement of the substance of both law and gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul."

PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another."

JESUS.

"As other men have creeds, so I have mine;
I keep the holy faith in God, in man,
And in the angels ministrant between."

THEODORE TILTON.

"I hold that heavenly grace abounds
Where *charity* is seen: that when
We climb to heaven, 'tis on the grounds
Of love to men."

ALICE CARY.

"How beautiful will life be then
When earth can cry, '*Behold my men!*'"
And woman in her perfect state
Be womanly, and yet be great."

EMMA TUTTLE.

GLADLY dropping institutional Christianity, with its meaningless imagery and moral deficiencies, and reverting to Jesus as a Heaven-ordained exponent of the positive religion,—receptive natures become at once conscious of a better baptism—a baptism not of Paul, nor of the John who cried in the Judean forests, but of that Divine baptismal influx, intromitting them into the Christ-spirit of love, which breathed and still breathes in accents

soft, subdued, and hallowed, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." God immanent in all things, governs by universal laws. Religion—primal—innate, is natural to man. God's revelations, through eternal nature and conscious human souls, have been made not partially to any chosen people, but to all nations and tribes; and they are what all may interpret, and all should obey. It is this action and re-action, this good and evil, as it is denominated—these struggles with difficulties, which develop in us a more perfect manhood. There is the pleasure of doing right, and the pain of conscience when duty is neglected; there are the pleasures of benevolence, and the pain of seeing our fellow-beings in distress; the pleasures of hope; the pleasures of memory; the pleasures of blessing others—in fine, all our faculties have their pleasures when legitimately exercised, their pains when not; and despite creedists' pitiable church dogmas—enough almost to demonise man's heart, and paralyse all his best efforts—the evolution of his higher spiritual nature goes unceasingly forward in search of God—the *absolute Good*. Aye, God *is* good; and it is blessed to ascend these earthly mountains of transfiguration, and feel the heart-beats of the Infinite throbbing through nature—blessed to come into a full consciousness of that positive religion, which is truly life eternal. Jesus, a natural seer, celestially inspired, planted his feet firmly upon that rock of truth, the positive religion of the soul. His clairvoyant vision was so unsealed, and his sweet sunny nature so aflame with holy enthusiasm, that he rose a very star above the clannishness of the Semitic nationalities, and exclaimed, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." This worship, pure and out-gushing, was to become, in the improved and mellowed future, permanent and universal. It asked for neither Pope nor robed priest. It required for acceptance neither pagoda nor synagogue. It demands in this century neither mosque nor churchal structure; its temple is the universe, its altar is the sincere heart, and its preachers, clad in the divine majesty of truth, are Reason, Intuition, and Inspiration. Reproving the saintly Pharisees for their ceremonies and outward forms of

devotion, Jesus advised no creed, enjoined no public prayer, nor suggested any articles of faith and belief. In sweetness and diction the Sermon on the Mount stands unsurpassed. The moral effect of the discourse was all the more potent from the purity of his daily life. Caring not to re-organise the lapsed and typical mummeries of the old literal dispensation, the whole tenor of his teaching and influence was to liberate truth from the literal bondage of clan or caste, and give it spiritual and universal expansion. Subordinating the earthly to the spiritual, he completely subjugated, in his later years, self-love to the fraternal; and this fraternal love,* seeding, budding in his affectional nature, soon bloomed out into the universal.

“I learn that grief is deepest laid
On hearts that deepest feel and deepest love.”

Jesus' sympathetic character was certainly sweeter than that of the masses of men. His aspirations were exalted. Angels

* Mr. Wheeler, in his critique upon the “Seers of the Ages,” objected to my conservative notions relative to the purpose of the sexual relations; to which we replied in the columns of the *Universe* as follows:—

“This is our position—Love is not lust, nor physical gratification, but a divine soul emotion, free, pure, fraternal, and holy. Further, we insist that the only legitimate purpose of the relational organisations of the sexes is procreation. Unperverted nature knows no waste—no useless expenditures. Marriage on the earthly plane is right—is *well*; but there are spiritual and celestial planes above this, to some degree attainable in this life, where, as Jesus said, ‘they neither marry, nor are given in marriage.’ If this is Shakerism, make the most of it. Certainly its practice can harm neither Christians nor Spiritualists.

“The Shakers have a number of flourishing societies in America. No other religious organisation can compare with them in being the literal followers of Jesus. Their neatness unequalled, their purity unquestioned, their music spiritual, their worship inspiring, their sole aim seems to be to build up the kingdom of God on earth.

“The members, before eating, all kneel, offering their thanksgivings in silence. Each has his and her appropriate place at the table. Order reigns supreme. Certainly healthy, they seem exceedingly happy. It is alleged that the general health and longevity of the Shakers exceed that of any other body of people in existence.

“They believe, so far as we understand them, in the paternity and maternity of the Divine Nature, and in the inherent fraternity of all human souls.

“They believe that Jesus was a man, overshadowed from the sacred moment of conception by divine influences from the Christ heaven of holiness; and baptized,

breathed directly upon him. No continued moral perversions impaired the delicate perceptions of his nature, chilled the fountain of his feelings, nor the currental flow of his soul's affections. Married by the inexorable law of affinity to humanity, he could not be chained, while on his missioned work, to another

consecrated and controlled by this Christ-Spirit, as one 'among many brothers,' he lived a pure, unmarried, self-sacrificing life. Ann Lee was baptized into this same Christ-Spirit of love, non-resistance, peace, and purity.

"They believe the Bible, the inspired Bibles of all nations, to be a record or records of the Word of God. The Word is not infallible. It is the 'Spirit that giveth life,' and the inspiration that lies behind the Word that gives truth its moral force. They listen to the Word of the Lord by Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Socrates, Jesus, Plotinus, Ann Lee, Swedenborg, Emerson, Parker, Beecher, *mortals* and *spirits*, and then judge in accordance with the apostolic injunction, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits.'

"Knowing, like Spiritualists, from demonstrations and angel ministrations, that there is a future existence, they believe that human beings, as moral actors, make by their voluntary deeds their heavens and hells in harmony with the inexorable law of compensation. They consider the spirit world the real and the eternal, this the shadowy and transient. In the bending heavens they recognise the 'many mansions' of the 'Father's house.' The buildings are symmetrical and beautiful. Societies are loving and harmonious. Purity is the password to these associations. In this heavenly land fields are vernal and fruits golden. Through evergreen gardens roll beautiful rivers clear as crystal. In the midst of these paradise lands is the 'Tree of Life.' Of its fruitage heavenly societies partake. Those peopling the spheres are still God's children, and progressive. Discipline and redemption go on in the future world. Upward all things tend, for God is over and in all.

"Having risen above the earthly, the Adamic plane, and living, like the Jesus of the Gospels, 'in the resurrection,' they ignore marriage, and believe in celibacy, practising most rigidly what they profess."

Elder Evans, replying to the *Springfield Republican*, Mass. U.S.A., said—

"'Eternal damnation,' we fondly hope, has no existence, except in Orthodox Gentile Christianity. Shakers making practical the equality of the sexes, consider that Jesus and Ann Lee was each the first-born of his and her own sex, unto the Christ Spirits in the first and second manifestation—that formed the scientific, or rational, necessity for two appearings.

"The resurrection is being raised from the generative plane to the spiritual plane, where the union of the sexes culminates in angelic purity, as between Jesus and some of the 'daughters of Jerusalem.' And the Christ Spirits, of the inner or seventh heaven, are the resurrection agents, not to the inhabitants of this earth only, but to those of all material worlds known to astronomy.

"Christ, in the progressive work of his second appearing, will 'take them all away' by the introduction of another system. One trumpet has sounded, and one cycle is near its end. There are six more trumpets yet to sound in the Shaker Order—a testimony for each coming cycle; 'then shall the end come,' and 'the harvest' be gathered from this sin-stained earth; everlasting righteousness shall

individuality. Quick to feel the sorrows of others, the sensitive tendrils of his loving heart, constantly attuned and tremulously responsive, vibrated to every sound of human suffering. He identified himself with sorrow and disgrace, with humanity in its lowest estate, that he might the more successfully exert the healing, saving, love-power of his soul in the redemption of the erring.

Considered with reference to religious cycles, Jesus stood upon the pinnacle of Hebrew Spiritualism, the great Judean Spiritualist of that era. As God is Spirit—that is, the infinite Spirit-Presence acting by the law of mediation—the apostle, with a singular clearness of perception, pronounced the Nazarene a “Mediator”—that is, a “medium” between God and men. The persecuted and martyred media of one age become gods in succeeding ages. Such manifests the world’s lack of both justice and wisdom.

But if Jesus was only divine man, “elder brother,” medium, wherein then, you will perhaps inquire, consisted his moral superiority over others of that era? If I rightly understand his essential and peculiar characteristics, his pre-eminent greatness consisted in his fine harmonial organisation; in a constant overshadowing of angelic influences; in the depth of his spirituality and love; in the keenness of his moral perceptions; in the expansiveness and warmth of his sympathies; in his unshadowed sincerity of heart; in his deep schooling into the

be established in human relations to God and Nature, and to each other; ‘and the nations shall learn war no more;’ for ‘the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ’ Spirits, and of the Christ people, who shall henceforth judge the world in righteousness. And the world—or civil governments—shall hold the land in common for the people, as the Shakers hold all property in common. All wars are about women or land. . . .

“In the coming millennium, Revelation and Reason must meet together, and Science and Religion kiss each other. Spiritualism is the science of sciences, and is no more religion than is geology or electricity religion. There is but one religion, and all peoples have a portion of it. Theologies and sciences, ‘falsely so called,’ are innumerable. Let us all learn to banish ignorance, subdue passion, and live in peace.”

Those wishing to know more of the Shaker doctrines and practices, should procure the “Autobiography of a Shaker,” by Elder F. W. Evans, Mount Lebanon, Columbia County, New York, U.S.A. A portion of this interesting volume was originally published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Boston.

spiritual gifts of Essenian circles; in his soul-pervading spirit of obedience to the mandates of *right* manifest in himself; in his unwearied, self-forgetting, self-sacrificing devotion to the welfare of universal humanity; and his perfect trust in God. The leading thoughts ever burning in his being for acceptance and actualisation were the divine Fatherhood of God, the universal brotherhood of man, the perpetual ministry of angels and spirits, and the absolute necessity of toleration, charity, forgiveness, love—in a word, *good works*. These, crystallising into action as a reform-force for human education and redemption, I denominate the *positive religion*, and consider it perfectly synonymous with Spiritualism—Spiritualism as a definition and practice in its best estate. This pure religion and undefiled, established in men's hearts and lives, and not on "sacred" parchments, would soon be felt in states and kingdoms, promoting peace, justice, and charity; rendering legal enactments wise and humanitarian, and causing the sweet waters of concord and good-will to flow over all the earth for the spiritual healing of the nations.

Few Spiritualists have yet reached the sublime altitudes of that positive or universal religion whose co-assistant is science, whose creed is freedom, whose psalm is love, and whose only prayer is holy work for human good. The best have not yet entered the vestibule of perfection. The ideal stretches afar in the golden distance. That there are extravagances, wild theories, and moral excrescences, sheltering themselves under the wide-spread wing of Spiritualism, is freely admitted. This is common to all new movements, involving the activities of the emotional nature. Let only the sinless stone the erring. Jesus, says the record, "came into the world not to *condemn*, but to save the world." Because the millennium has not dawned during this first phenomenal cycle of the twenty-one years of modern Spiritualism—because the temple with its inner glories is as yet only seen in vision—because our fondest hopes are not realised, nor our lofty ideas attained, shall we go back to the beggarly elements of the world, and seek spiritual nourishment from re-chewing old churchal husks? Only in weakness and blind-

ness does human nature seek a return to the "flesh-pots" of the past. If Spiritualists are not free, generous, tolerant, and prosperous—if they are not above the level of the age in good works, in order and fitness, in reform effort and general culture—if they are not the ready recipients of the freshest truths of science and philosophy—if they are not full-grown harmonial men and women, the fault is not in Spiritualism, but in themselves. "Examine yourselves" was a good old apostolic injunction. Spiritualism can gain nothing by aping the ecclesiastical customs of other denominations. Awkward combinations are ever to be avoided. While it is true that master-builders are constructionists, and that the good in all organisations is to be carefully conserved, Spiritualists must never adopt any measures for cramping the unfolding intellect, nor strive to utter the shibboleth of any man-made form of faith; for in the introduction of this modern wave of Spiritualism upon earth, the angels of heaven purposed the formation of no new sect. Their aim, higher and holier, was to educate, enlighten, and spiritualise God's dear humanity.

These are among the divine enunciations of that positive religion, based upon the immutable principles of justice, goodness, and human rights:—

God immanent and active in all things.

Man above all institutions.

The strict equality of the sexes.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

"Blessed are the pure in heart."

"By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another."

Self-abnegation being the first law of life, the highest good consists in aiding and doing good to others.

"Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; sick, and ye visited me; in prison,

and ye came unto me." "Inasmuch as ye have done these things to the least of one of these my servants, ye have done it unto me."

This is the religion of Jesus, the religion of the soul, the inborn religion of all men. Its witnesses have been the luminous suns and stars along the ages. When J. G. Whittier, accompanied by an English philanthropist, visited that eminent Unitarian, the Rev. Dr. Channing, for the last time in Rhode Island, their themes of conversation were reform, progress, peace, toleration, and human elevation. Sweet and sacred such hours of social converse, when soul pulses to soul in kindred love and sympathy. Mr. Whittier, referring to it afterwards, wrote these tender lines :—

" No bars of sect or clime were felt—
The Babel strife of tongues had ceased—
And at one common altar knelt
The Quaker and the Priest."

Thus may, thus *do* the hearts of the good and the erudite ever blend in unison. Such fellowship constitutes heaven upon earth. When the white feet of the venerable William Howitt press the sunny slopes of the summer-land, the angels that make radiant the upper kingdoms of God will not inquire, "Were you on earth Catholic or Protestant, Independent, Spiritualist, or Christian Spiritualist?" but "Were you a true man, a lover of humanity, and a brother of mercy?" "Then shall the King say, Come, ye blessed of my Father." Love was the test of discipleship in Christ's time. Purity was and *is* the test of heavenly acceptance in all spheres of existence.

" Lovest thou me ?"

" Love is the fulfilling of the law."

" Love worketh no ill to its neighbour."

" If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."

" Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord ! shall enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he that *doeth* the will of my Father who is in Heaven."

In the light of these inspirations, what of this vaunting talk about "Christian" Spiritualism, this demanding of fixed beliefs,

this crimination for opinion's sake? It is but the babble of "old wives' fables." If you cannot walk peaceably with your brother, good reader, go your own way, kindly leaving the road. Heaven, as London, may be reached from different directions.

Made subject to vanity, experimenting and journeying through this world of shadows, *all* need the staff of prayer and the lamp of faith—need to feel that God is a constant presence; that Christ is the light of truth; and that loving angels are waiting to minister to our spiritual wants. A life without love and trust, even if it be of the strictest morality, or of a continual ascetic struggle after Divine communion, will never bring the individual really into the Inner Temple. Little children symbolise the receptivities of the heavenly life. The humble heart, sheltered away from the storms of passion, and all vested over with the fragrant blossoms of sweet human affections, is often nearer in spirit to the angels than the cold philosopher. Love inspires, wisdom guides, faith opens the gate, and self-sacrifice leads the way into the city of peace—the City of God. Oh! come let us worship in this temple of the eternal religion—a temple whose foundations are deep and wide as the nature of man, and whose dome reaching into the Heaven of Heavens, shall shelter and overhallow the races with millennial glory.

The world is rapidly ripening for a fuller fellowship of progressive minds. The Rev. J. W. Potter, in the February *Radical*, while lucidly touching upon the decline of effete institutions, and the nearing of the New Jerusalem with its tongues and pentecostal baptisms, hails the approaching dawn of "another form of faith and worship, which shall not be Hinduism, nor Buddhism, nor Judaism, nor Christianity, but a religious development of humanity, in which all technical distinctions between these specific forms of religion shall be obliterated, and nations and races shall meet in a spiritual fellowship whose limits shall be commensurate with humanity itself."

A late Frankfort paper says that a clergyman in the Bavarian Palatinate, the Rev. Dr. Mook, has been censured by the Consistory, and declared unworthy of the trust reposed in him. Dr. Mook's answer to the Consistory contains the following words:

"The gulf which exists in the Church between faith and knowledge it is now more than ever impossible to fill up. In no place are more *lies* told than in the pulpit. No assembly represents less knowledge and cultivation than one come together for public worship. If the multiplication table were prayed, there would be more sense in it than in the so-called Apostolic Creed. The belauded freedom of teaching is a demonstrably empty form. The faith contained therein is a homœopathic tincture, to which every century has added a drop of distilled lunacy. Religion, to be acceptable to coming generations must represent the power of love, and a warmth of spirit and breadth of purpose, chiming in naturally with the progress of events."

The Rev. F. E. Abbot, with a noble independence, makes, in *The Index*, of January, a new "confession," not of Christianity, but of religion. These are his words:—"The central doctrine of Christianity is for me no longer true; its essential spirit and faith are no longer the highest or the best; and with the reality I resign the name. Far be it from me to do this in levity or mockery or defiance! Far be it from me to turn my back in scorn on my most hallowed experiences in the past! Once I felt the full power of the Christian faith; now I cleave to a faith diviner still." The superior charms of this faith he indicates in a style instinct with the divine energy of truth. "It is," he says, "Intellect daring to think, unawed by public opinion. It is Conscience daring to assert a higher law, in face of a corrupted society and a conforming church. It is Will setting at naught the world's tyrannies, and putting into action the private whispers of the still small voice. It is Heart resting in the universal and changeless law of eternal, transcendent love."

The little child, religious by nature, delights to peruse the life of Jesus as told in John's Gospel. Reading it ourselves, we feel a sweet throbbing within, as if the heart-chords were swept by an angel's breath. I fully accept this sentiment of Renan—"His life-deeds of benevolence will grow without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt

the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that, among the sons of men, there is none born greater than Jesus." Dying on Calvary a martyr, his principles live for ever; while he, a perpetual inspiration to this earth by the law of mediation, discourses of love—universal love, conjoined with work and wisdom, as the only redemptive forces approved and owned of God. Anciently preaching to spirits in prison, he is now preaching to spirits in the celestial mansions of light. This becomes him, because a cosmic ruler, a moral vicegerent, or Christ-angel of this planet, and a willing instrument in the hands of God for the spiritual education of swarming humanities, receiving an ever-flowing, life-giving influx direct from the great heart of the Divine Intelligence.

When this universal religion of love—shadowed in twilight by Indian sages, seen in increasing sunlight by Syrian seers, and consciously felt to-day by the more highly inspired—becomes actualised in, and outwrought through, the personal lives of earth's surging millions, it will no longer be selfishly said, "Mine, mine," but "Ours, yours, *all* who appropriate it for holy uses." Then our country will be the universe, our home the world, our rest wherever a human heart beats in sympathy with our own, and the highest happiness of each will be found to consist in aiding and blessing others. Then will the soil be as free for all to cultivate as the air they breathe; gardens will blossom and bear fruit for the most humble; orphans will find homes of tenderest sympathy in all houses; the tanned brows of toiling millions will be wreathed with the white roses of peace; and the great family of humanity will be obedient to and trust in love, law, liberty—God! In holiest fellowship with Jesus and angels, with loved and loving spirits in the tender bosom of the Infinite, then, is my soul's rest for ever.

THE END.



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